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FORT MCMURRAY
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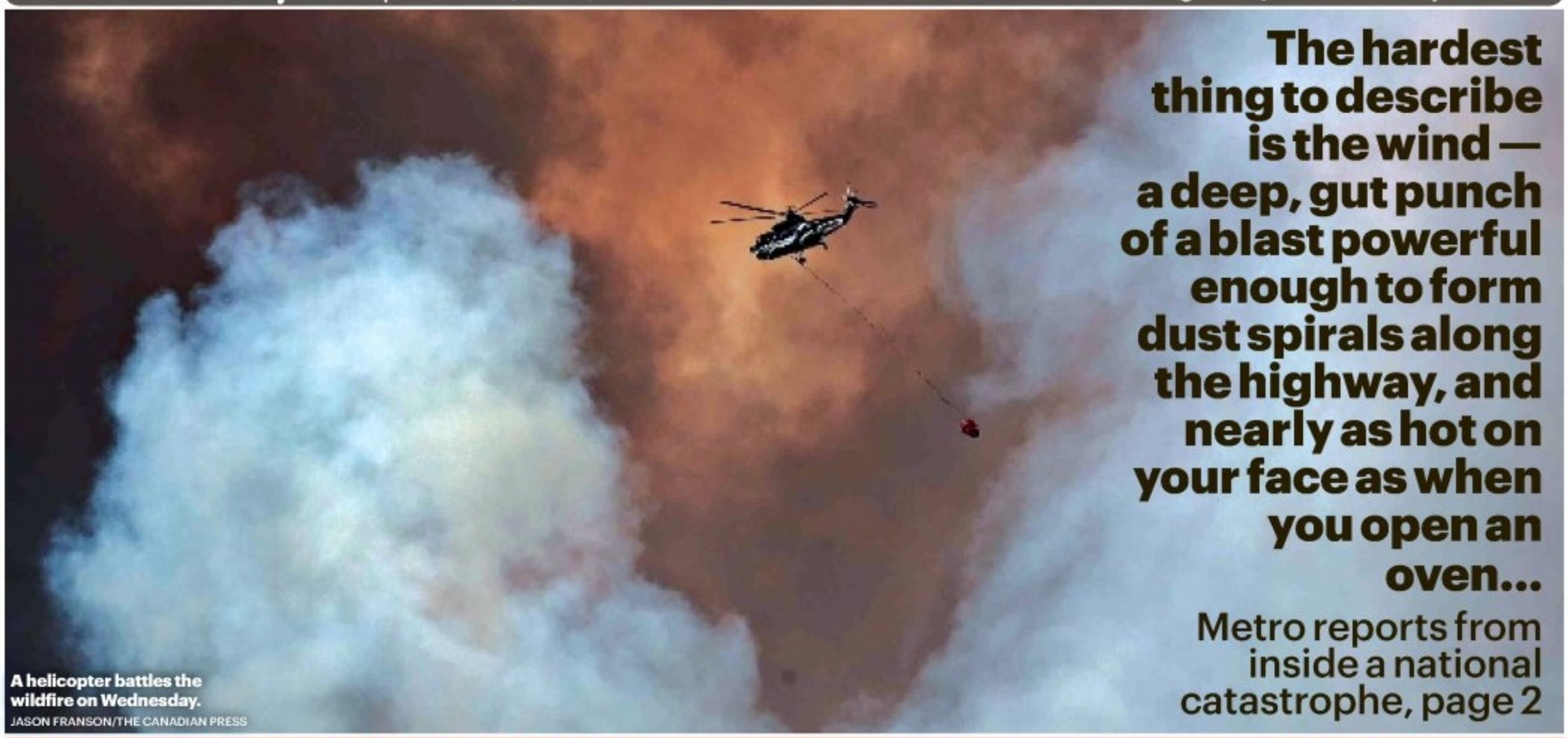

The hardest thing to describe is the wind — a deep, gut punch of a blast powerful enough to form dust spirals along the highway, and nearly as hot on your face as when you open an oven...

Metro reports from inside a national catastrophe, page 2

A helicopter battles the wildfire on Wednesday.
JASON FRANSON/THE CANADIAN PRESS

SPECIAL REPORT FORT MCMURRAY WILDFIRE — **7 pages of COVERAGE**

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metro NEWS

TIMELINE

MAY 1, 6:27 PM: POLICE WARN OF FIRES BURNING TO NORTH AND SOUTH OF CITY

Fort McMurray resident Crystal Maltais buckles in her daughter, Mckennah Stapley, after evacuating their home Tuesday.
COURTESY TOPHER SEGUIN

Facing fire

Tim Querengesser
IN FORT MCMURRAY

The hardest thing to describe is the wind — a deep, gut punch of a blast powerful enough to form dust spirals along the highway, and nearly as hot on your face as when you open an oven.

The next thing is the smell — solvents, charcoal, ash — punctuated by the sound of sirens and desperate calls, seemingly everywhere along the highway, for diesel — "you got any diesel?"

Those calls were part of the overriding feeling of helplessness Wednesday evening, here on the southern edge of Fort McMurray, as dozens of people who wanted to help were forced to hold station by police as the fire yet again crossed Highway 63, the only road into town.

"Black smoke usually means a house or a car is on fire," said Jeff Parker, sitting in frustrated limbo in the cab of his truck as 50,000 litres of diesel — intended for firefighters battling the blaze — sat uselessly behind him. "And I see a lot of black smoke."

Parker has been trucking up to Fort McMurray since 2009 and has dozens of friends who live there, many of whom have been displaced.

"It's the old proverbial saying that it all depends on how the wind blows," he said. "Right now it's not the right way. What I saw today is 1,000 times worse than yesterday."

> **It's the old proverbial saying that it all depends on how the wind blows. Right now it's not the right way. What I saw today is 1,000 times worse than yesterday.**
> Jeff Parker

Just a few kilometres north, the fire that people who fight them have called "nasty" — one that has pushed more than 88,000 people to flee north and south of a remote city surrounded by boreal forest — continued inflicting pain.

By Wednesday evening its flames had swollen to 10,000 hectares, from 7,500, and officials worried the class 4 fire might potentially spread to the city's airport. More than 250 firefighters, many who came at a moment's notice to help, were battling to save a city that's small in population but central to the economic health of Alberta.

That fight was already lost in many areas: More than 1,600 homes and business have been destroyed, and with the trifecta of 30C temperatures, low humidity and strong winds — along with worries about lightning storms — officials feared the fire was not done destroying.

On Wednesday afternoon, Alberta Premier Rachel Notley declared a state of emergency, the Canadian military began mobilizing to help and the fire claimed its first fatality — in a car accident near Lac La Biche, as thousands continued to flee south.

Approaching the city from Edmonton, kilometre-long convoys of pickups trucks, evacuation buses and SUVs, many coated in beige ash, turned roads in northern Alberta into a human river.

Abandoned vehicles — including one city bus — were left scattered along Highway 63's shoulders, an apocalyptic vibe counteracted by dozens of good Samaritans, who set up spontaneous gas stations and restaurants Wednesday right on the asphalt, offering gasoline out of jerry cans, water or food out of the back of their pickup trucks.

"It's going to be a long-term recovery," said Scott Long, executive director of provincial operations at Alberta Emergency Management Agency, in a daily briefing on the fire. "The damages are surprising. It will take years (to recover), for sure."

From Parker's cab, watching clouds of smoke billow through the windshield, that was a sentiment shared.

"To bounce back from this, it's doable, but it's not going to be overnight," he said.

Tim Querengesser is the managing editor of Metro Edmonton. He has written about Fort McMurray for various publications and has covered western and northern Canada since 2008.

A FIRE UNFOLDS
From the first spark to a barren city, these are the moments that defined the disaster

MAY 1 - 9:57 PM Fort McMurray Mayor Melissa Blake signs a local state of emergency, allowing officials to declare evacuation orders for communities.

MAY 2 – 6:05 AM Residents are warned of poor air quality and low visibility in much of Wood Buffalo.

MAY 2 - 11:00 AM **550** Officials say **the fire is between 550 and 750 hectares** in size but not yet threatening homes.

Newborns among evacuated

EMERGENCY

Alberta Health Services moves patients to safety quickly

Ryan Tumilty
Metro | Edmonton

During the height of the fire consuming Fort McMurray, Alberta Health Services staff had to evacuate more than 100 patients from the city's hospital to escape, including nine newborn babies.

Dr. Verna Yiu AHS' Interim CEO confirmed early Wednesday morning that they had successfully moved all of the patients out of the Northern Lights Regional Health Centre to Edmonton.

"We had nine babies that were in the neonatal unit that actually had their mother with them and had to be evacuated," she said.

Yiu said AHS worked with WestJet to dispatch a plane to an oilsands site where most of the patients were initially evacuated to and brought all of them to Edmonton. She said it was an incredible effort.

"I have to say that I am really, really grateful and proud of our staff," she said.

She said moving that many patients, who are now scattered around Edmonton hospitals, took an enormous amount of co-ordination and work, all while many employees were losing their own homes.

"Those employees and staff also had their own families to worry about," she said.

She said all of the patients including the newborns were healthy.

A family takes refuge in the back of their boat after evacuation at a rest stop near Fort McMurray, Alta. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Cuddles is believed trapped in an apartment. CONTRIBUTED

COMPASSION

Crisis means displaced animals

Jeremy Simes
For Metro | Calgary

Many animals in Fort McMurray have been displaced or left behind as wildfires continued to burn at "explosive" levels Wednesday.

Deanna Thompson, executive director of the Alberta Animal Rescue Society, said some will be flown to Calgary.

At a news conference Wednesday morning, Fort McMurray Fire Chief Darby Allen said 48 animals saved from homes are at the McDonald Reception Centre. But other animals have not been so lucky.

RJ Bailot, executive director with the Alberta Spay Neuter Task Force, said rescue groups have been barred from entering the city to rescue animals trapped in homes.

"It's awful," he said. "We have dogs and cats in homes that are desperate. There's nothing we can do."

Bailot said a Facebook page, Fort McMurray Fire Emergency Animal Assistance, has been created to let owners know which camps and hotels are accepting animals.

SURVIVAL

Escaping a city of fire and smoke on horseback

Liz Brown
Metro | Canada

As the wind changed and wildfires pushed toward the north side of Fort McMurray, 16-year-old Jada Polem saddled up her horse and started riding through the bumper-to-bumper traffic on Confederation Way.

On Monday, her family had moved their three horses from Clearwater Horse Club on the city's south side to a northside campground they thought would be safe. But Tuesday, winds shifted and in hours they were moving their horses again.

"We were waiting for trailers to come back to pick up my horse, but it became impossible for them to get through," says Polem.

As the smoke worsened, Polem's father drove the truck and trailer that could only hold two horses while his daughter rode the third alongside. It was a terrifying prospect, as horses can be nervous in traffic, but Polem saw no other choice.

"She was a little nervous," Polem says of her Quarter Horse mare Mya. "But she handled it really well."

Now the whole family — horses included — is safe. They're camping in their trailer in Boyle, 350 kilometres south of Fort McMurray. But Polem isn't sure about the status of their home. If there is extensive damage to their home, the family may stay in Boyle for the summer as they rebuild.

Karley Kenny, also a member of the Clearwater Horse Club, escapes on her horse while ponying two others. JULIE LODGE

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A FIRE UNFOLDS
From the first spark to a barren city, these are the moments that defined the disaster

Fire Chief Darby Allen urges residents to get their emergency kits ready.

MAY 3 – 11:00AM

Mandatory evacuations are issued. Residents are told to go now to MacDonald Island Park.

MAY 3 - 2:05 PM

THE BIG MOVE. The city decides to split Fort McMurray in two. Those who live south of the bridge drive south on Highway 63 and those who live north drive north.

MAY 3 - 12:00 PM

The Fort McMurray evacuation

EMERGENCY

Two dead after collision on Highway 881

Jeremy Simes
For Metro | Calgary

The successful evacuation of 88,000 people from Fort McMurray was a gargantuan undertaking in such a short period of time.

Dale Benfield, deputy director of emergency management with the Rural Municipality of Wood Buffalo, told Metro the orderly response was due largely to early volunteer evacuation compliance, dividing the town in two, community assistance and social media.

The evacuation orders began Sunday, as Fort McMurray Mayor Melissa Blake signed a local state of emergency, allowing officials to declare evacuation orders for communities.

Shortly after, volunteer evacuations began for the communities of Gregoire and Prairie Creek.

Later on in the day, as fire conditions changed and the city limits were threatened, mandatory evacuation orders were put in place in Prairie Creek and Centennial Park.

Vehicles line the highway as residents leave Fort McMurray, Alta., on Tuesday. JASON FRANSON/THE CANADIAN PRESS

There was a tragic turn of events Wednesday when an SUV collided head on with a tractor-trailer on Highway 881, a southern escape road, killing two and shutting down the road in both directions.

Volunteer departures begin

A fleet of buses was commandeered to get Gregoire residents evacuated to Mac Island and residents in Prairie Creek and Centennial Park were started to get moved out.

By early Monday, the volunteer count that was set out had been reached, and those three communities were essentially cleared of residents.

Later that day, after an assessment of the fire, Prairie Creek and Gregoire residents were told they could return home if they chose, but most didn't go back, fearing the situation could escalate.

Mandatory evacuation ordered

Shifting winds and other weather factors combined to create a perfect storm for the wildfire to shift course and continue bearing down on the city.

At that time, Fort McMurray ordered mandatory evacuation for Beacon Hill, Abasand, Waterways, Draper, Saline Creek, Grayling Terrace, Downtown, Thickwood, Wood Buffalo and Dickinsfield.

A city divided

It was "the big move," according to Benfield. He said the city decided to split Fort McMurray in two, where those who live south of the bridge would drive south on Highway 63 and those who live north would drive north.

Benfield said he didn't make notes during this time.

At 1 p.m. Tuesday afternoon, there were 75 officers working on the ground, knocking on doors, directing traffic and using loudspeakers to notify people.

Dozens of others were also on social media, notifying people online about evacuation information.

"We had to make some decisions based on speed and direction of fire," Benfield said.

"We had to make the best decisions we could with the information we had at the time."

Complete clearout

By 6 p.m. Tuesday, all residents of Fort McMurray were ordered to flee. But by this point, Benfield said most of people were already on the road, either heading north or south as told.

But he commended residents for the smooth evacuation.

"This is where the community came together," he said.

"People were helping people. People weren't putting themselves before others — they were trying to help their neighbour and get everybody as quickly as told."

WITH FILES FROM THE CANADIAN PRESS

EVACUEE AID

'Albertans are helping Albertans'

When Char Kaye saw fire ravaging Fort McMurray on the news — from the safety and comfort of her home near Edmonton, she told herself she had to do something to help.

She bought deodorant and toothbrushes, packed up toys and blankets, then took to social media and offered up her home to strangers.

"The hand that feeds us is the oil industry and I know Fort McMurray plays a gigantic part in the economy," Kaye said Wednesday from her house in Spruce Grove.

"They need everything they can get and watching it literally go up in flames is just devastating."

People have been opening their homes, cupboards and wallets for fire evacuees from Fort McMurray since the city's 80,000 residents were told to flee Tuesday.

> **"They need everything they can get and watching it literally go up in flames is just devastating.**
> Char Kaye

Social media is rife with offers of free meals, tire repairs, pet food and even graduation gowns for high school students who have lost theirs in the fire.

Some fitness centres are letting evacuees use their showers. U-Haul has offered of a month of storage and boxes.

The Red Cross says it's ramping up its call centre to deal with a flood of monetary donations. The Edmonton Food Bank is also preparing to send shipments north.

"It's pretty heart-warming," says Candace Fabian, choking back tears.

On Tuesday night, Fabian opened her home in Fort MacKay, north of Fort McMurray, to about 20 relatives and their friends — and their 11 dogs and two cats. They slept in spare bedrooms and on blow-up mattresses on the floor.

She lent one of her vehicles Wednesday to a cousin, and about half her guests moved on to other homes.

Fabian says she's glad to help and everyone has been thankful. THE CANADIAN PRESS

A FIRE UNFOLDS
From the first spark to a barren city, these are the moments that defined the disaster

MAY 3 – 6:20 PM
All of Fort McMurray is placed under a mandatory evacuation order, including MacDonald Island.

MAY 3 - 9:41 PM
Motorists stranded on Highway 63 are asked to stay put as police patrol the area with gas cans.

MAY 3 - 10:00 PM
Edmonton Fire Rescue and the Edmonton Police Service send fleets to help with the Wood Buffalo fires.

State of emergency in effect

CRISIS

Province takes control of 'unstable' situation

Alberta declared a state of emergency Wednesday as crews frantically held back wind-whipped wildfires that have already torched 1,600 homes and other buildings in Fort McMurray, forcing all 80,000 residents to flee.

"The situation in Fort McMurray is not stable. It is unstable," Scott Long of Alberta Emergency Management told reporters in a Wednesday afternoon briefing.

"The downtown core is being held through some Herculean efforts of the structural firefighters in the area."

Municipal Affairs Minister Danielle Larivee said the state of emergency allows the province to take full control of the situation, conscript people if necessary and bulldoze structures as required.

There were dangerous and dramatic developments on multiple fronts Wednesday in a story that has made headlines worldwide with stunning video footage of trucks and cars driving past sheer walls of flame.

There were haunting images of scorched trucks, charred homes and telephone poles, burned out from the bottom up, hanging in the wires like little wooden crosses.

Alberta Premier Rachel Notley flew up to survey the situation first-hand, while officials in the evacuation centre had to bolt to the south of the city as flames edged closer.

The blaze effectively cut Fort McMurray in two late Tuesday, forcing about 10,000 north to the safety of oilsands work camps.

The other 70,000 were sent streaming south in a bumper-to-bumper snake line of cars and trucks that stretched beyond the horizon. Some vehicles sat in ditches, the victims of engine trouble or a lack of gas.

The displaced arrived in communities of Anzac, Lac La Biche and Edmonton. Some were going as far as Calgary.

Crews had been battling the blaze since Sunday. But the situation turned destructive within minutes on Tuesday afternoon when the blaze, whipped up by winds, roared into the southwest corner of the city.

It engulfed homes in three subdivisions and destroyed vehicles, gas stations and a motel. Most of the homes in the suburbs of Beacon Hill and Waterways were destroyed.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

A helicopter battles a wildfire in Fort McMurray, Alta., on Wednesday.
JASON FRANSON/THE CANADIAN PRESS

SUPPORT

Canada reacts

ONTARIO

The Ontario Natural Resources Ministry announced it would send water-bombing aircraft and more than 100 fire rangers to northern Alberta. The firefighters were scheduled to ship out Friday.

Toronto-based charity GlobalMedic was ready to commit aerial drones to help firefighters better view the affected areas. The aid organization also offered inflatable housing and water-purification materials.

BRITISH COLUMBIA

B.C. Premier Christy Clark told media Wednesday the province needs to focus on its own wildfires as a blaze continues to ravage Fort McMurray. The province is unable to spare any firefighters to help Alberta's efforts, but Clark says B.C. has done "everything (Alberta) has asked us to do" so far. METRO

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A FIRE UNFOLDS
From the first spark to a barren city, these are the moments that defined the disaster

7.5K
Officials say the out-of-control conflagration spans between 7,500 and 10,000 hectares.
MAY 4 - 10:00 AM

Wood Buffalo announces 88,000 people have been evacuated, with no reports of injury.
MAY 4 - 10:28 AM

A boil-water advisory is issued for the entire region.
MAY 4 - 11:06 AM

'Total support' offered

DISASTER RELIEF

PM Trudeau pledges federal resources to Fort McMurray

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau says the federal government will provide all possible assistance to Alberta as wildfires ravage Fort McMurray.

Canada is a country of people who help each other in challenging times, Trudeau told his caucus Wednesday.

"I've been dealing with offers of support and calls from the Atlantic provinces, all the way out to B.C., as people are looking for how they can support their friends and neighbours as people go through this difficult time."

Trudeau urged people with friends or family in Fort McMurray to make sure they are OK and ask what help they need.

Federal leaders called on Canadians who want to help to donate to the Red Cross.

The prime minister said he has already spoken to Alberta Premier Rachel Notley to offer his government's "total support."

Defence Minister Harjit Sajjan, in a conference call from Germany early Wednesday, confirmed a formal request for assistance has been received from the Alberta government.

Notley told a news conference that a memorandum of understanding had been signed with National Defence to provide helicopters for search-and-rescue efforts in isolated spots around Fort McMurray as well as transport aircraft to fly in firefighters. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau says Canada is a country of people who help each other in challenging times.
THE CANADIAN PRESS

AGENDAS

Notley absent from premiers' conference

A disastrous wildfire raging in northern Alberta has forced government leaders in western Canada to tweak their plans to meet in Vancouver later this week and has pushed emergency management towards the front of the meeting's agenda.

Alberta Premier Rachel Notley will no longer attend the 2016 Western Premiers' Conference, which is scheduled to run Thursday and Friday. Deputy Premier Sarah Hoffman, who also serves as the province's health minister, will replace Notley as Alberta's representative.

British Columbia Premier Christy Clark, who is hosting the annual gathering, said emergency management will be at the forefront of the discussions as the blaze in Fort McMurray, Alta., forces tens of thousands to flee the encroaching flames.

Alberta Premier Rachel Notley THE CANADIAN PRESS

"Alberta's in the midst of it at the moment, but every other western province experiences forest fires, floods, concerns about earthquakes and other disasters," Clark said. Still, Clark said much of the conference would also centre around the economy, given what she described as Western Canada's role in a national context.

"We have traditionally been the economic engine of the country for the last decade," she said. THE CANADIAN PRESS

AIR SUPPORT

Military aircraft join wildfire fight with promise of more help

The Canadian military has deployed helicopters and transport planes in response to the raging wildfire that has incinerated parts of Fort McMurray, Alta. — with more support to come as needed.

Four CH-146 Griffon helicopters are en route to perform evacuations in surrounding communities under threat from the raging blaze. Another two choppers are on standby at 408 Squadron in Edmonton.

Additionally, a C-130J Hercules has been moved to the nearby military airfield in Cold Lake, while a second Hercules and a C-17 Globemaster heavy-lift transport on standby at the country's largest military airbase in Trenton, Ont., to aid in the movement of firefighters and equipment.

Brig.-Gen. Wayne Eyre, who is in charge of the 3rd Canadian Division and the military commander for Western Canada, called it a "very dynamic" situation, saying planners are looking ahead at what kind of requests could come next.

At one point Tuesday night when it didn't look like a large-scale evacuation of the city would be possible, the air force was on standby with transport aircraft to go in, Eyre said from Edmonton during a conference call.

That didn't prove necessary, with the reopening of Highway 63. Eyre said the Alberta government is soon expected to formally ask other provinces and northern U.S. states for help in fighting the fire; the air force could play a role in getting crews to where they are needed.

Eyre said the Hercules is well-suited for landing on remote roads and could be employed getting firefighters into isolated locations. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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A FIRE UNFOLDS
From the first spark to a barren city, these are the moments that defined the disaster

The Alberta government declares a state of emergency.

MAY 4 - 3:30 PM

Fire and smoke burn through a forest near Thompson, Man. in 2003. MANITOBA GOVERNMENT FILE

'Peg firefighters want to lend hand

ASSISTANCE

Responders 'on call' but needed here

Braeden Jones
Metro | Winnipeg

Firefighters in Winnipeg are ready and willing to join forces with those battling the horrific blaze that evacuated Fort McMurray, but the province says it can't spare the resources.

Alex Forrest, president of the United Firefighters of Winnipeg, said he and Winnipeg Fire and Paramedic Service (WFPS) leadership have "been in touch" with command on the ground in Alberta.

"We are on call," Forrest said. "If they need assistance, we can send resources if we have to. We'd have a quick turnaround to send resources if needed, but right now they're not requesting any because they have sufficient support."

Forrest said firefighters in Winnipeg started calling him, "saying they're willing to take off immediately to go help."

Forrest said if any help is requested, it would most likely be for urban firefighters like those in the WFPS.

"They need the firefighters to protect structures (in the city)," he said. "In discussion with some of the firefighters there, they are going non-stop… that's what they're short on."

But Infrastructure Minister Blaine Pederson and the province's fire program manage, Gary Friesen, said Manitoba doesn't have resources to spare.

"We only have enough resources to work in Manitoba," said Friesen.

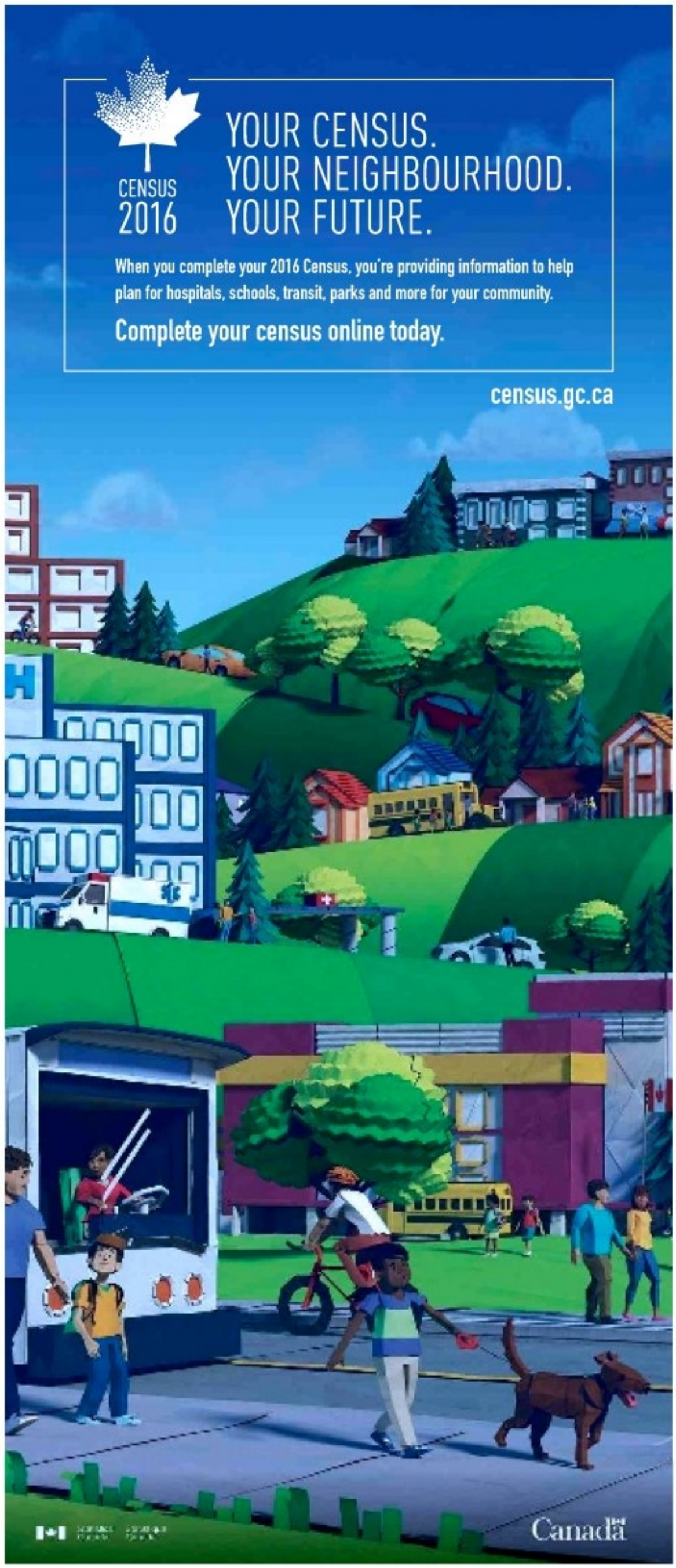
— WITH FILES FROM STEPHANIE TAYLOR AND ELISHA DACEY/METRO

MANITOBA NO STRANGER TO DISASTER

Elie Tornado, 2007 – Several homes were lost but no one was killed when a remarkable F5 tornado bore down on the town of Elie 40 kilometres west of Winnipeg on June 22. The tornado was classified an F5 thanks to one well-built house that was torn off its foundation. It's the only tornado in Canada to ever reach an F5 rating (the highest possible.)

Flood of the Century, 1997 – The Red River flood of 1997 was the most severe flood of the Red River since 1826. Winnipeggers pulled together, and thanks to the Floodway, damage in the city was minimal, but outside Winnipeg, damages reached $500 million. Grand Forks in the U.S. saw 50,000 people evacuated, most of the town flooded, and the downtown burn.

Flood of 1950 – The last major flood before Duff Roblin built "Duff's Ditch," the flood of 1950 destroyed 10,000 homes in Winnipeg, and 5,000 buildings were damaged. The total cost of the flood was estimated at around $1 billion in today's dollars. It was caused by heavy snowmelt and rainfall in early May. ELISHA DACEY/METRO PHOTOS ALL PUBLIC DOMAIN



MUNICIPAL POLITICS

Winnipeg missing waste cut target

Stephanie Taylor
Metro | Winnipeg

Winnipeg's mayor admits the city won't meet its target of diverting half its waste from landfills by 2020, and has no intention of setting a new goal.

Brian Bowman was responding to reporters' questions Wednesday, regarding the city's plan to move ahead with procuring new garbage and recycling contracts, after its current ones expire in 2017.

That plan does not include organics collection, as city staff are in the process of developing a new consultation plan.

A city council decided back in 2011 that in the next four years, they wanted to see the amount of waste diverted from landfills increase to at least half.

An initiative staff within the water and waste department has said repeatedly would require the implementation of an organics pickup program.

"I do believe that we are not going to be able to meet those targets set by previous council … without an organics program, and so we're trying to act as diligently as possible," Bowman said.

He said he not considered setting new targets, but emphasized the city's role in mitigating climate change, pointing to the recent establishment of a climate change working group.

BODY FOUND CATHERINE CURTIS' face is shown on a poster near Sturgeon Creek by the Grace Hospital Wednesday. Two sources with knowledge of the scene confirmed a body had been found near where the 60-year-old woman disappeared on April 25. Winnipeg police confirmed a body had been found but said they would not identify it until after the results of an autopsy. BRAEDEN JONES/METRO

Firefighters battle a recent arson that involved a garage. ALEX FORREST/METRO

Arson's high costs

SUSPECTED CRIMES

Firefighters face greater risk battling set blazes

Braeden Jones
Metro | Winnipeg

The city's rash of arsons does more than just property damage — they take their toll on those who put their lives on the line, says one firefighter.

Winnipeg firefighters responded to another eight fires Tuesday night after battling dozens more across the city in the past two weeks.

Winnipeg Fire and Paramedic Service (WFPS) member Derek Balcaen was working both Monday and Tuesday night, during which he and other members attended 20 fires altogether.

"It certainly can be exhausting," Balcaen said.

His union representative, Alex Forrest, said many of the recent fires in the city showed signs indicating potential arson, and are being investigated as such.

He said arson is suspected in "almost all" of the fires from the past two nights. Balcaen said arsons are more dangerous for emergency personnel.

Arsonists often employ accelerants and light fires in several places rather than igniting a single point, which can lead to a fire spreading faster, said Balcaen.

"Normally (firefighters) have 'X' amount of time before things get over a threshold of danger, whereas with accelerants you roll up and they're sometimes past that threshold," he said.

Also, arson fires often take place at night, which means firefighters have to assume there are people inside homes.

"We automatically assume greater amounts of risk to go in and make those searches and make absolutely sure (we evacuate) possible occupants," Balcaen said.

Between firefighting, deconstruction, demolition, clean-up and restocking, Balcaen said each fire response requires much more work than most people realize.

But both he and Forrest said the saving grace for the WFPS during this time of increased workload has been "proper staffing and equipment (access)."

"I do have to give kudos to the mayor and city council," Balcaen said.

"It's very easy to complain about shortages… but right now we certainly do have the man power (needed)."

Mayor Brian Bowman said Wednesday he has met with fire Chief John Lane and has been briefed on the recent increase in potential arson cases.

He said the integrated arson task force made up of police, fire and paramedic services and its ongoing efforts "are being leveraged right now to investigate some of the recent fires."

metro VIEWS
Your essential daily news
Thursday, May 5, 2016

RUSSELL WANGERSKY: WE'RE WITH YOU, FORT MCMURRAY

One thing you can say about our history of moving west for work? It stretches families far apart, but it weaves us together across a big country.

They're talking about Fort McMurray on the St. John's, N.L. Metrobus.

People don't usually talk much on the Metrobus, you understand. But they're talking today, and it's a conversation being heard across the Atlantic provinces, from Tim Hortons in Sydney to small towns in the Annapolis Valley. A simple trip online finds reporters from Newfoundland to Charlottetown to Halifax asking Atlantic Canadians in Alberta to get in touch.

The talk started Tuesday night with the first evacuation order in Fort McMurray. Social media lit up with first-hand tweets and Facebook posts about the fire. Soon, there was a complete evacuation, video showing the fire terrifyingly close, and people at this end of the country posting information about how to make telephone donations to the Red Cross.

On Wednesday, fire officials were watching the weather, expecting wind, and posting grim lists of the areas hardest hit by the advancing fire: "Beacon Hill — 80 per cent loss of homes; Timberlea — 12 trailers lost on Mckinlay Cres."

For so many East Coast workers and their families, Fort McMurray is a long way west, but also the worksite next door.

The oilpatch may be slowing, but it's far from stopped: scores of Atlantic Canadians either travel there for work or have moved to the northern Alberta city, putting down roots. Some people (not completely glibly) call it Newfoundland and Labrador's second largest city. Cape Breton could say the same.

It's the great class equalizer on many East Coast flights: workers sometimes use their frequent flyer status to move up into first class, bringing baseball caps and work jackets into the rarefied land of Air Canada's Zone 1.

Fort McMurray is far closer than geography suggests.

HANG IN THERE **You don't have to tell people on the East Coast about the devastation in Alberta** — the oilpatch is 'as near as a nephew or niece,' Russell Wangersky writes.
MICHAEL DE ADDER/THE CANADIAN PRESS

It also means that Fort McMurray is far closer than geography suggests.

By Wednesday morning, Edmonton was expecting 20,000 evacuees, and thousands more had gone north. It's an evacuation of astounding proportions and it's touching people across this region quickly, people wondering and worrying about friends and family on the move.

How close to home is Fort Mac to people on the East Coast? You don't have to tell anyone here about it — it's as near as a nephew or niece.

At The Telegram in St. John's, the news editor reposted Tweets in almost real-time from his nephews, their car turned around by a transformer explosion and forced north out of the city.

One of The Telegram's reporters used to work at Fort McMurray Today, the city's main newspaper; his daughter, born in the Alberta city, made her parents turn off the television because she can't watch the fire burning places she knows.

And there's this exchange, posted on Facebook by my niece, recounting a conversation with her four-year-old about my niece's sister in Fort McMurray:

"Mommy what's going on?"

"It's a fire, sweetheart."

"Is Auntie Christina OK?"

"Yes buddy."

"Does she still have a bed?"

"I don't think so, sweet pea."

"It's OK mommy. She can sleep here in my bed."

In the office next to mine, an editor hasn't slept, following a friend's journey — husband, wife, seven-year-old twins and the family dog — north out of Fort McMurray, into huge highway gridlock, then south again, taking their chances along a previously closed highway, until there's a 1:30 a.m. post saying they are safely out of range of the fire: "We were 8 hrs in our car and finally made it out ... It's surreal to not know what exactly we are facing in the next few days."

One thing you can say about our history of moving west for work?

It stretches families far apart but it weaves us together across a big country, as well.

I remember, years ago, talking to a woman who ran a lounge in a small town on the southern tip of Newfoundland's Avalon Peninsula. The town was too small to keep the lounge running, so it was closed most of the time. We were in an airplane, heading west, but she'd flown east to open the lounge for a wake.

She lived in Fort McMurray, working as a manager in a hardware store. Her husband was driving a dump truck at Syncrude — her son, too. At the time, one daughter was working at a rape crisis centre, the other at a vet's office.

Every time there was a wedding or a funeral, she'd fly home to open the only lounge in the area.

There are ties that go both ways, regardless of the distance. And Fort Mac is on Eastern Canadian minds and lips today.

Russell Wangersky is the Atlantic region columnist for TC Media.

ROSEMARY WESTWOOD

metro*view*

Of course Alberta's wildfire is political. Everything is political.

Burnt-out cars, charred and flattened homes, air soft with smoke in a grey-hued sunrise. The fire had eaten much on its first terrible day, before growing ever wilder and uncontrolled.

"It was just like an apocalypse," one man told CBC Radio, of the walls of flame that lined the highways and kissed the treetops and the black inferno sky above Fort McMurray: the heart of the oilsands.

Until submerged in a fire of biblical proportions, Fort Mac had long functioned as a kind of shorthand for Alberta vs. Canada animosity. The place where bitumen was squeezed from sand, imagined and unvisited by most Canadians who nonetheless hold some opinion about our economic dependence on the oil industry and the threat of climate change.

(Never mind that Fort Mac runs on the work of average Canadians, the brains of the oilsands reside elsewhere.)

Local fire chief Darby Allen called it a "nasty, dirty" fire, adjectives uttered in the past to describe the belabored way oil companies extract their resource from the land, transforming it.

And that metaphor, of Fort McMurray as the heart of oilsands darkness, was on the minds of some as the fire broke: "I'm glad the #FortMacFire is happening in the province most responsible for causing climate change that caused the fire in the first place," tweeted one Vancouver man, displaying gross callousness, even if many others had already, silently, seen a terrible irony.

Far more measured was Elizabeth May who, pressed by reporters, called it "a disaster that is very related to the global climate crisis," according to the National Observer.

Most perversely, some even accused a "disgusting" Alberta Premier Rachel Notley of using the fire to appear to care about an oil town in a display of crass opportunism.

The larger story, of course, has been national dismay at the unfolding tragedy and an unusually united amount of love flowing towards the oil rigs.

But wistful calls for everyone to set aside politics ring false. A wildfire may be indiscriminate, but people and places are always political. Inevitably, they taint events, and they will taint this, too.

Before it is satiated, the fire will devastate tens of thousands of people, and the miracle is that no one has died.

The politics is, as always, as you see it. As for any kind of reckoning, the most important is to come, when those forced to flee return to tally what is left of their lives.

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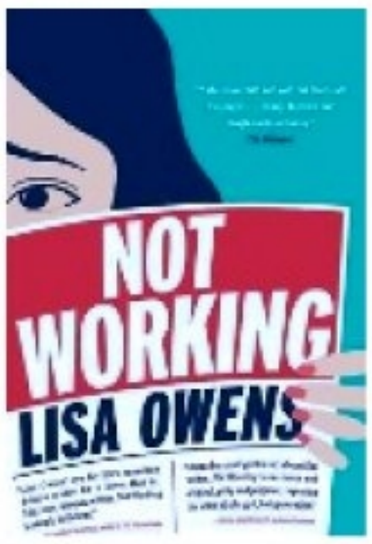
A three-billion-year-old diamond the size of a tennis ball could fetch more than $90 million when Canadian mining company Lucara Diamond Corp. puts it up for auction this summer.

You are not what you do

INTERVIEW

Chasing a dream job becomes futile for character

Melita Kuburas
Metro | Canada



A friend and former colleague who works in journalism once explained her theory about the difference between a "dream job" and a "fantasy job."

The dream job is attainable; it's something you work towards, she says. A fantasy job is what you wish you were doing when you're totally burnt out. (Hers was municipal parks worker. Mine? Marine biologist.)

But for many adults who don't have a defined career path, the dream job, too, might as well be imaginary.

That's the case in Not Working, the first novel from Lisa Owens, 30, in which the main character Claire Flannery quits a "creative communications" job she dislikes to figure out what she really wants to do.

Claire's time off is spent loitering in coffee shops, pressuring busy friends into just *one more* drink at the bar, and watching grotesque online videos.

"She has this grand idea that it's going to be this journey of self-discovery that she can direct, and that she can make herself a better person. Instead it becomes this introspective time of inertia," says Owens.

Her character is smart but self-destructive — a lovable screwball with knack for pointed observation, even in a hungover state.

"Did you not even get *dressed*?" asks Claire's boyfriend, a doctor, as he comes home to find her re-watching a clip of a sperm whale being dissected. By this point, she has given up on Ulysses.

The idea for the story was partly influenced by a stretch of time off Owens had in between jobs a few years ago.

"I was going to go to all these art galleries and do all of this cultural stuff," says Owens. In reality, she watched a lot of TV and met friends for lunch, which wasn't fun because unlike her, they were busy.

"I was very much aware that everyone else I knew was working on a different clock. If I hadn't had a job to go back to, how would that have felt?" she says, of how the idea formed.

One impact of this ideleness on Claire is anxiety — she inspects every mole with the same suspicion she applies to her well-meaning boyfriend's attempt at words of encouragement.

Without a job and daily routine, everything else suddenly starts to come into question, says Owens, and they do for Claire. Should she be going to the gym more? Is it too late to have children? Does she even like living in London?

The character is in her late twenties, though her exact age is never specified in the book. She's relatable to anyone who has ever dreaded the question "So what do you do?" at a party.

"I think there's a certain pressure on my generation to think that you should feel like, this amazing sense of fulfillment in your day job and I think it can actually be quite dangerous and quite tough ... on people like Claire, who don't really know what that is," says Owens.

The danger, she adds, is they may feel like they're wasting away their potential by working a job that's just a 9 to 5.

"So that was definitely something I wanted to challenge — that idea that 'oh, you should just be absolutely loving everything you do.'"

Chasing a dream job, then, is probably a waste of time — it doesn't necessarily exist, says Owens.

There is a lot of pressure on her generation to find that "**dream job,**" even though that ideal 9-to-5 doesn't exist, says author **Lisa Owens, 30.** COURTESY ALEXANDER JAMES

The Good Witch has Cassie Nightingale smiling enigmatically — a lot. CONTRIBUTED

JOHANNA SCHNELLER WHAT I'M WATCHING

Good Witch is a dangerous treacle

THE SHOW: Good Witch, Season 2, Episode 2 (W)
THE MOMENT: Cassie's advice

Cassie Nightingale (Catherine Bell), who magically sells customers whatever they need, is training a new salesgirl in her store (or rather, shoppe), Bell Book and Candle — located on Main Street in Middleton, USA, where it's always Christmas or Halloween. The salesgirl had some accident with her hands, which prevents her from pursuing her dream job. (Or something like that. I might have dozed off. Trust me, it doesn't matter.)

"How can I help?" the salesgirl asks.

"Oh, there's always something to be done at the Bell Book and Candle," Cassie says, smiling enigmatically.

Sure enough, the salesgirl solders a glass box. She's cured!

I have to apologize to the women of North America. I knew you were tired, but I didn't know you were this tired. The only reason anyone could watch this show is that they're so stressed, they need this tranquilizer in television form.

Every moment of the series is the same moment, engineered to lull viewers into a Chardonnay coma: Somebody asks Cassie what he/she should do, and she smiles enigmatically (her sole expression, because her face is frozen stiff).

I actually worry about Good Witch falling into the wrong hands — this is some weapons-grade treacle. Vladimir Putin could become the showrunner, bore us into submissive somnolence, and take over Canada while we nap.

So if you're ever on the subway home thinking, "I'm so wrung out, maybe I'll watch Good Witch," call me instead and I'll come brush your hair. No one should be this tired.

Johanna Schneller is a media connoisseur who zeroes in on pop-culture moments. She appears Monday through Thursday.

How Marcia went from punchline to real person

CRIME

Former O.J. Simpson prosecutor now an author

Marcia Clark has a new book out called **Blood Defense**, the same year that FX miniseries American Crime Story brought the O.J. trial back into the spotlight. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

In the televised "15-month nightmare" that was the O.J. Simpson trial, Marcia Clark woke up beaten. "I was just so burnt out. I was emotionally depleted, physically depleted," says the former prosecutor. "I couldn't even conceive of walking back into the courtroom."

She became a kind of punchline, the lawyer who bungled the Trial of the Century, a perceived slam dunk out of the gate. From Saturday Night Live skits in the 1990s to a Tina Fey parody on Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt last year, Clark was a long-running joke.

But in 2016, more than 20 years later, she's newly venerated, much in thanks to the FX miniseries depicting her courtroom nightmare: American Crime Story, in which actress Sarah Paulson played the former prosecutor to much acclaim, including Clark's. "We are now understood more like real people instead of cartoons," says Clark, who credits the popular series for adding "more layers" to her media portrayal, going behind the scenes with her and legal partner Chris Darden, whom she calls her "rock" during the trial.

"Whenever there's a major public event that gets covered for a period of time everybody kind of winds up being caricatured. That happened to all of us, too."

The anthology series ended its first season in April, but the year is just beginning for Clark, who has become a successful crime novelist. Her latest is called Blood Defense and follows a criminal defence lawyer handling a high-profile double-murder case, which Clark knows a thing or two about.

The O.J. Simpson trial began in 1994 after the murders of Simpson's ex-wife, Nicole Brown Simpson, and waiter Ron Goldman. Simpson was acquitted of all charges after a defence team led by Johnnie Cochran presented the argument he'd been framed by a racist LAPD, a strategy that many feel distracted from the victims.

"Ron and Nicole were the only two words not spoken in that trial," says Clark.

Dubbed the "Trial of the Century," it was one of the most publicized trials in American history and high profile was what Clark had always wanted as part of the Special Trials Unit in the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office. "High profile meant that maybe a reporter showed up at the arraignment. Your picture was never taken. They barely got your name right if they mentioned your name at all: that was high profile," she says.

But for Clark on the O.J. trial, high profile meant public scrutiny. Naturally, watching the show brought on a "weird mix of emotions," she says. "It's very difficult to go back and remember everything. It digs up all the memories; the pain and the sadness, and the sense of futility that we felt for the whole tenancy of the case."

She'll be reminded again in June, when CTV and ESPN air a new documentary called O.J.: Made in America.

But a silver lining for the formerly misunderstood attorney is that she's become a kind of millennial idol with the FX series. Many of the show's viewers were in diapers when the trial made headlines. They're watching with a different, "much hipper" perspective than their parents, Clark has noticed. She's not a punch line anymore but a trailblazer.

As for the man at the centre of her televised nightmare two decades ago, Simpson is in prison on unrelated charges and is eligible for parole in 2017.

Is there any doubt in Clark's mind that he committed those murders in 1994?

"How could there be any?" she asks. "None."

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Stories of the variety store

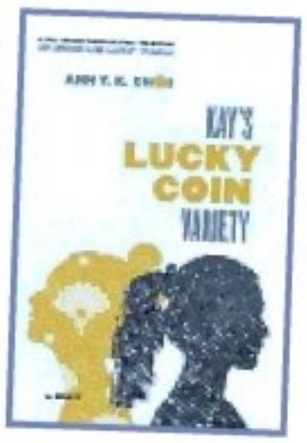
DEBUT NOVEL

Author sheds light on Korean immigrant experience

Sue Carter
For Metro Canada

Sometimes it takes a little push from an unlikely place to fulfil a personal dream. For Ann Choi, a guidance counsellor at a Toronto high school, it came in 2007 when she asked a struggling student what he wanted to do with his life. He responded by asking her the same question right back. Not wanting to be a hypocrite, Choi answered quickly. After all, she knew exactly what she wanted: to write a book.

Choi also knew exactly what she wanted to write. Since the early 1990s, she had been holding onto story ideas about the Korean immigrant experience, specifically those of young women who felt torn between the demands of their parents and the desire to be a "typical" Canadian teenager.



"There was a lot of frustration with cultural expectations," Choi says. "And a lot of frustration with our mothers. We felt a sense of burden because 90 per cent or more of our parents were variety-store owners."

A composite of those women, and her own life, became the inspiration for Mary — or Yu-Rhee — the protagonist of Choi's debut novel, Kay's Lucky Coin Variety, published by Simon & Schuster Canada. Mary, who lives above her parents' convenience store, struggles with hormonally charged teenage emotions and experiences, but still must act like an adult.

"When other kids got to hang out at the mall after school, most of us were stamping packages of instant soup or working the cash register," Choi says.

For those in the community, Kay's Lucky Coin Variety will resonate in its accuracy and details.

While growing up, Choi loved the intersection of people that came into her family's store, but it could also be a very scary place, as her character Mary learns.

"I wanted to capture all this," Choi says. "The Korean variety-store generation is now dying off. Our parents sacrificed and put us through school and now, my brothers and I, we don't work in variety stores anymore."

Sue Carter is the editor at Quill & Quire magazine.

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The gift of her

Henrietta Walmark

Henrietta Walmark with daughter Sofia — then 5, now 30 — in Maine together in 1991. CONTRIBUTED

An annual ritual I share with my ex-husband amuses our daughter, Sofia. On Mother's Day, he thanks me for the gift of her. And I reciprocate on Father's Day. Best thing we ever did, her father and I say to one another in earnest, to eye rolls from the object of our affection.

Sofia was 10 when her dad and I split up, but the tradition of gratitude continued with the three of us gathering for Mother's Day brunches at a local restaurant, a favourite place where we celebrated family occasions and milestones until her father moved to Indonesia six years ago.

Being Sofia's 'mum' — a British-ism acquired honestly from her very English granny — has meant having an ongoing and affectionate relationship with her dad.

That she thanks us for setting an example of mutual respect is more satisfying than any gift or a decadent meal. Which is just as well, as she is 1,400 km away studying at university and we won't be seeing each other for Mother's Day this year.

Trying to keep up with her fierce intelligence and wild streak has reshaped my life. This Mother's Day, I'll celebrate the great adventure of being her mum.

Still our mother-daughter connection runs deep. I was invited to her over-the-top 30th birthday bash last month where all the other guests were 20-something. I had a blast. The party pushed me out of my comfort zone, like so many experiences we've shared.

I ventured into new neighbourhoods and venues at all hours when teenage Sofia's plans went awry. She still apologizes to me for those particularly challenging years.

She introduced arty me to the beauty of pure mathematics and physics, which is what you might expect from a kid who has Euler's equation inked on the inside of her wrist.

Thanks to Sofia, I was no bourgeois soccer mom; I was a circus mom. After several years on the sidelines watching as my preteen daughter mastered flying trapeze, I was coaxed into trying it myself and then kept at it for eight years.

Trying to keep up with her fierce intelligence and wild streak has reshaped my life. This Mother's Day, I'll celebrate the great adventure of being her mum. I'll mourn a second pregnancy that ended in miscarriage. I'll think of friends who long for a child yet can't conceive, and of those who have lost their mothers. I'll remember the deep affection I shared with my former mother-in-law and her long-time companion. I'll recall last year's sweet and unexpected Mother's Day call from my former son-in-law. And I'll spend the day with my amazing mom.

Oh, and I'll be waiting to hear from Sofia's dad. I'll smile to think of Sofia rolling her eyes even though she won't be here when he thanks me yet again for the gift of her.

Something a little bit unexpected

You've given her the tulips, a big box of chocolates. This year you're looking to give something more unique and a little unexpected. Astrid Van Den Broek shares some ideas.

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Something for new moms: a break

GIFTS

What most new moms really want is gratitude, and some time off

Kristen Thompson

I barely remember my first Mother's Day.

I was four weeks into my new gig as a mom, walking around in a fog, exhausted and overwhelmed. Then one little ribbon-wrapped box from my husband turned that all around. Inside was a silver necklace with a circle pendant. On one side was my daughter's name, on the other side her birthdate. Simple, thoughtful, and heart-warming.

There's something unforgettable about the perfect gesture of love and thanks. And that can be hard to narrow down for new moms or moms-to-be, because there hasn't been much time to establish family traditions, and the kids aren't old enough to give their own glue-drenched creations.

There are unlimited gift ideas for new mamas — from hand vacuums to meal delivery services, bottles of wine and pedicure gift certificates. But at the end of the day, what most really want is gratitude, and a break.

I don't mean let them have a 20-minute shower with the door locked. I mean pack those rug rats up and get them out of the house. Before you leave, hand her a book and a coffee with Bailey's (don't skimp on the Bailey's). Give her the day off wiping noses, changing diapers and re-filling sippy cups. And thank her. Again and again, say thank you.

That's what Toronto mom Karen Leslie is hoping for.

"What I want for Mother's Day is not a grand gesture or expensive gift, but some time," she said. "Even an hour not being asked for (something). Just time to be responsible for no one, just my own needs, a bit of time to recharge."

Sudbury mom Emma Dunkley Elliott, who had her first baby in April, agrees.

"As a new mom, I'm pretty exhausted most of the time, so a relaxing day and a little pampering would be fantastic," she said. "Breakfast in bed comes to mind."

"My husband came home last week with a framed photo of me and our daughter. I was so touched I burst into tears. Amid the exhaustion and the emotions, it was such a thoughtful gesture. I think that is a great gift idea."

Jayme Selazek, 32, is due with her first baby in the beginning of June and says the most meaningful way to be celebrated is to make time together as a family.

"Gifts aren't a huge deal, so there shouldn't be a lot of pressure to give them.

But if (someone's) husband wanted to give something, I would suggest something simple (like) a … spa day. Or do something that has been on the to-do list forever. Gifts that are simple, but appreciated."

Sara Ehrhardt, a first time mom to an 11-month-old son, said the best thing spouses can for Mother's Day is listen to cues from their partners.

"For me (the perfect gift is) something to make the family function better. For others, it may be something that makes them feel less like a mom and more like a woman," she said.

Kristen Thompson will be celebrating Mother's Day her two daughters, Isla, 3, and Polly, now seven months. CONTRIBUTED

"Moms can feel lonely those first years (and they) receive very little feedback while mothering babies. So … a day to be recognized feels nice."

New motherhood is different for anyone, but one universal truth is that it can feel exhausting and thankless. We spend so much time doing things for our little ones, it leaves very little time to look after ourselves.

So as much as we love presents, what we really need is a break, we need someone to cater to our needs, and we need to hear the words "You amaze me." And lots and lots of cuddles from the kids. Don't forget the cuddles.

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Gift ideas for new moms

A night at a hotel

Hands down, what most want for Mother's Day is alone time. You could just take the kids out of the house for a couple hours. Or you could seriously step up your game by sending her to a hotel for the night. Many hotels offer packages that include wine and chocolate in the room, and breakfast in the morning. Bonus points for choosing one that offers spa services. Start your search at hotels.ca, which has last minute Mother's Day deals.

- Price: As low as $150
- Available a her favourite hotel, hotels.ca

What I Love About My Mom book

Just because the kids are too little to tell mom how much they appreciate her doesn't mean you can't do it for them. This little book contains fill-in-the-blank lines to describe why mom's the best. Fill it in on behalf of the kids, and it's sure to warm her heart.

- Price: $12
- Available at Indigo stores, indigo.ca.

Personalized pendant necklace

A popular gift item for moms is a charm necklace with engravings of kids' names, initials or finger prints. Kate Spade has a beautiful charm necklace that allows you to engrave an initial on one side, and a small message on the back – like a child's birth dates.

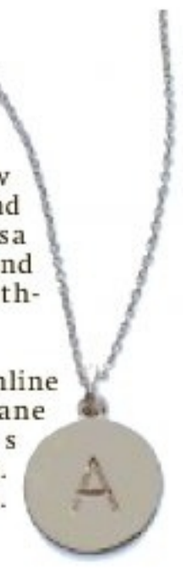
- Price: $64
- Available at The Bay, thebay.com.

L'Occitane Lavender Star Gift Set

Aside from alone time, most moms say they want to feel pampered for Mother's Day. Allow her to feel pampered and relaxed from the comfort of her home with a lavender gift set from L'Occitane, which includes foaming bath, hand cream, soap, a perfumed sachet and a scented candle.

Then draw her a bath, hand her a mimosa and a book, and close the bathroom door.

- Price: $76
- Available online or at L'Occitane boutiques around Canada. Visit loccitane.ca.



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No, she doesn't have everything

BEAUTY

Some products that'll make mom happy this year

Janine Falcon

Beauty BFF
Universally flattering with a mix of matte, satin and velvety finishes, the new Charlotte Tilbury Instant Look in a Palette is such a gorgeous compact for eyes, cheeks and face that you'll want one for yourself, too. $85 at Holt Renfrew, holtrenfrew.com.

Floral Notes
The Body Shop British Rose collection is lovely, fresh range crafted with organic roses grown and hand-harvested in Heredfordshire, England. A standout is the Instant Glow Body Essence that gives skin the prettiest sheen. $21 at The Body Shop, thebodyshop.ca.

Scent Appeal
Lushly floral yet airy with a subtle sensuality, Ex Nihilo Paris Fleur Narcotique is a sparkling bouquet of jasmine and peony with a base of oakmoss and musk. Could be mom's new signature fragrance. From $295 at Saks Fifth Avenue, saksoff5th.ca.

Face On
The genius Demarché Labs Roloxin Lift Instant Skin Smoothing Masque is so good at delivering on its promise — all day! — that you should get the 30-mask kit for each of you. They're that good. From $59 for 5 masks, Sephora, sephora.ca.

Power Wash
A Clarisonic's cleansing power is in the way it superswishes water and cleanser into nooks and crannies as you glide it across the skin. Now it comes in this super-cute, hand-friendly Mia Fit form mom will love. $199 at Hudson's Bay, thebay.com and Sephora, sephora.ca.

Natural Wonder
If mom's into natural skincare, Sahajan skincare takes the concept to another level with innovative formulas that incorporate a modern take on traditional Ayurvedic remedies. Discovery Kit, $70 at sahajan.com and well.ca.

Happy Hour
A playful watch like the colourful Swatch Only For You model — it comes with a matching brooch embedded in the box — gives keeping time a cheerful twist. $90, swatch.com for retailers.

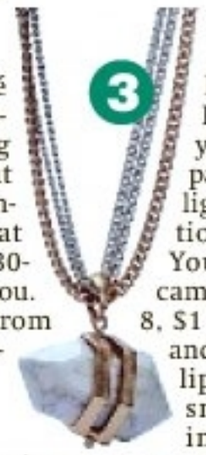
Loving Trinkets
Kudos to Indigo for highlighting Jenny Bird and Biko, Canadian jewelry lines by designers known for their unique, edgy aesthetic. We love the Jenny Bird x Indigo Abundance Pendant Necklace Clear Stone for Mom. $75 at Indigo, indigo.ca.

Kisses and Smiles
Longtime sponsor Caryl Baker Visage has partnered with the Starlight Children's Foundation to support its 2016 Your Purchase Counts campaign: From May 1 to 8, $1 from each ceramide-and-shea-butter-enriched lipstick sold will bring smiles to ill children in Canada. $18 each; carylbakervisage.com for locations.

Charm Candy
A delightful art-deco-esque Alex and Ani Luna Moth Bangle is just the thing to add to mom's collection – or get her started. $38, alexandani.com for retailers.

Polish Perfection
Warning: giving mom a Guerlain La Petite Robe Noire Deliciously Shiny Nail Colour may spoil her for all others. Truth: the superb luxury formula, excellent brush and gorgeous hues put most others in the shade. $27, Guerlain counters and boutiques.

Waiting to Inhale
With a Saje Natural Wellness AromaGem Nebulizer and her favourite essential oils, Mom can turn any room into a fresh-air sanctuary. $69.95, saje.ca for retailers.



1 Saje Natural Wellness AromaGem Nebulizer, $69.95, saje.ca.
2 Swatch Only For You model, $90, swatch.com.
3 Jenny Bird and Biko, Canadian jewelry lines, Stone for Mom, $75 at Indigo.
4 Ex Nihilo Paris Fleur Narcotique, from $295 at Saks Fifth Avenue.
5 Charlotte Tilbury Instant Look in a Palette, $85 at Holt Renfrew, holtrenfrew.com.
6 The Body Shop British Rose collection, $21 at The Body Shop, thebodyshop.ca.

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Mother's strength helps Olympian

Olympian Rosie MacLennan, right, with her mom Jane. CONTRIBUTED

Rosie MacLennan competes on Day 9 of the Toronto 2015 Pan Am Games. GETTY IMAGES

Vawn Himmelsbach

> **It's a mother's job to internalize your worry and focus on solutions, to teach patience and help set priorities in the long term**
> Rosie's Mom, Jane MacLennan

Rosie MacLennan always wanted to be an Olympian. And, after winning Canada's only gold medal at the 2012 Olympics in London for women's trampoline, she reached a new personal best for her final routine. But, on the road to Rio, which kicks off Aug. 3, she had a setback: a concussion that left her unable to do what she loves most.

Rosie has always relied on her mother, Jane, for emotional support, but perhaps never as much as the past year — making this Mother's Day particularly poignant. "She's definitely been a source of strength in times where there's been uncertainties," she said.

Her mother wasn't there when she fell. And Rosie didn't think to mention it — after all, it wasn't a big fall. But then the headaches started to come, along with dizziness. "When you flip 20 feet into the air, that isn't ideal," said Rosie.

But it was the emotional issues that were harder to deal with — she didn't know when, or if, she would jump again. "I had no idea if I would be back in time to compete at the World's," she said, which is the one and only chance to qualify for the Olympics.

"I was having panic attacks just because of the uncertainty," said Rosie. "Talking to my mom, she kept me grounded and kept me focused on my recovery, teaching me [that] life will go on no matter what happens." After losing five months of training, she now has a clear bill of health and is heading to Rio.

"Every mother worries about potential injury and the long-term impact on their life," said Jane. "It's a mother's job to internalize your worry and focus on solutions, to teach patience and help set priorities in the long term."

She has a lifetime of experience internalizing those worries. Years ago, when Rosie was a child, the two were in a car accident. Fortunately, no one was hurt, but the car was totalled. In that moment, the first thing Jane thought of was her daughter — and she immediately tried to create a sense of calm while waiting for paramedics to arrive at the scene.

That's also her job whenever Rosie competes. It's hard for her to watch her daughter jumping so high up in the air. "I'm glad she's still on the trampoline when she finishes," she said. "I'm told I jump every time she does."

But she manages to do a good job of creating a sense of calm, because Rosie doesn't pick up on those nerves.

Rosie, who began competing internationally at the age of 11, won the Canadian National Women's Championships in 2005, 2009 and 2011. At the 2008 Beijing Olympics, she finished in 7th place, and went on to win a gold medal at the 2011 Pan Am Games in Mexico and second place at the 2011 Trampoline World Championships in Birmingham.

But at the 2012 Olympics in London, the pressure was on.

There were 17,000 people in the crowd and Rosie had no idea where her family was sitting. She was going over her routine in her head, when she happened to look up and see her mom in the crowd of thousands.

"I remember the instant change — I instantly felt lighter," said Rosie. "When I looked at her face, it was instant peace of mind. It gave me confidence and it reminded me I was doing what I loved." She went on to win gold.

Tech mom out for Mother's Day

GADGETY GIFTS

Seven great gadget gift ideas to keep her connected

Marc Saltzman

Chocolates are sweet and flowers are thoughtful, but given the fact geek is the new chic, why not pick up mom a gadgety gift for Mother's Day?

After all, today's busy moms could probably use a high-tech hand while on the go, whether it's to stay organized, entertained or in touch with those who matter.

And unlike a spa treatment, a tech toy lasts more than an hour.

If you need some suggestions for Sunday, May 8, the following are some gadget gift ideas – ranging in price from $59 to $549.

For the workaholic

Can't decide whether mom could benefit from a laptop or tablet? You don't need to choose with the Dell Inspiron 11 3000 (from $499.99), a versatile 2-in-1 that transforms from one mode to another. When you no longer need a keyboard and trackpad, simply bend back the 11-inch screen 360 degrees and use your fingertips on the touchscreen to swipe through movies, TV shows, ebooks, games, and photos. Powered by a 6th Gen Intel Core processor, this hybrid also enjoys long battery life of up to 7 hours between charges.

For the bookworm

"Books are a uniquely portable magic," said Stephen King – and you can give the gift of magic with an ebook reader for avid readers. In fact, the Kobo Aura H20 ($179) is the first premium waterproof ereader, so it can be brought into the tub, by the pool, or to the beach. The anti-glare e-ink screen can be read clearly in bright sunlight, or take advantage of the integrated light to read while curled up in bed, rather than disturbing a sleepy partner with a night table lamp.

The Kobo eBookstore features more than four million titles, plus you can borrow ebooks for free from your local library. Battery life lasts tops two months between charges.

For creative types

Whether mom's a budding photographer, artist, writer or scrapbooker, the Epson Expression ET-2550 EcoTank All-in-One ($399) lets you print for up to two years before you need to refill the ink tanks. Yes, you read that correctly. This Wi-Fi-enabled printer/scanner/copier has an ink yield of 4,000 black and 6,500 colour prints, and can print up to 9.2 pages per minute for black and 4.5 pages for colour. And when it's time to replace the ink, each bottle only costs $18 per colour.

For the coffee lover

How nice would it be to wake up, reach for your phone or tablet and tap an app that tells your coffee machine to make you that perfect cup of Jo?

It's possible with the Nespresso OriginalLine Prodigio (from $269), the first smartphone-connected machine from the Swiss company. Using Bluetooth technology, the machine seamlessly links with the Nespresso app to allow you to prepare coffee remotely with just a few taps, plus it also helps with capsule stock management, brewing schedules, maintenance alerts, and more.

For fitness fanatics

If you think your exercise-loving mom would appreciate a more comprehensive fitness tracker than what she's using now, HTC and Under Armour have partnered to create UA HealthBox ($549), a connected health system that tracks and manages your activity, fitness, sleep, and nutrition. In the box you get a wearable UA Band (for the wrist), a UA Heart Rate monitor (with chest strap), and a smart UA Scale (measuring weight and body fat) — all of which connect wirelessly to the UA Record companion app for Android or Apple iOS.

Each device sends data to your device, illustrated on a dashboard within the app, plus you're provided with information and motivation to help achieve fitness and health goals.

For the 'socially connected' mom

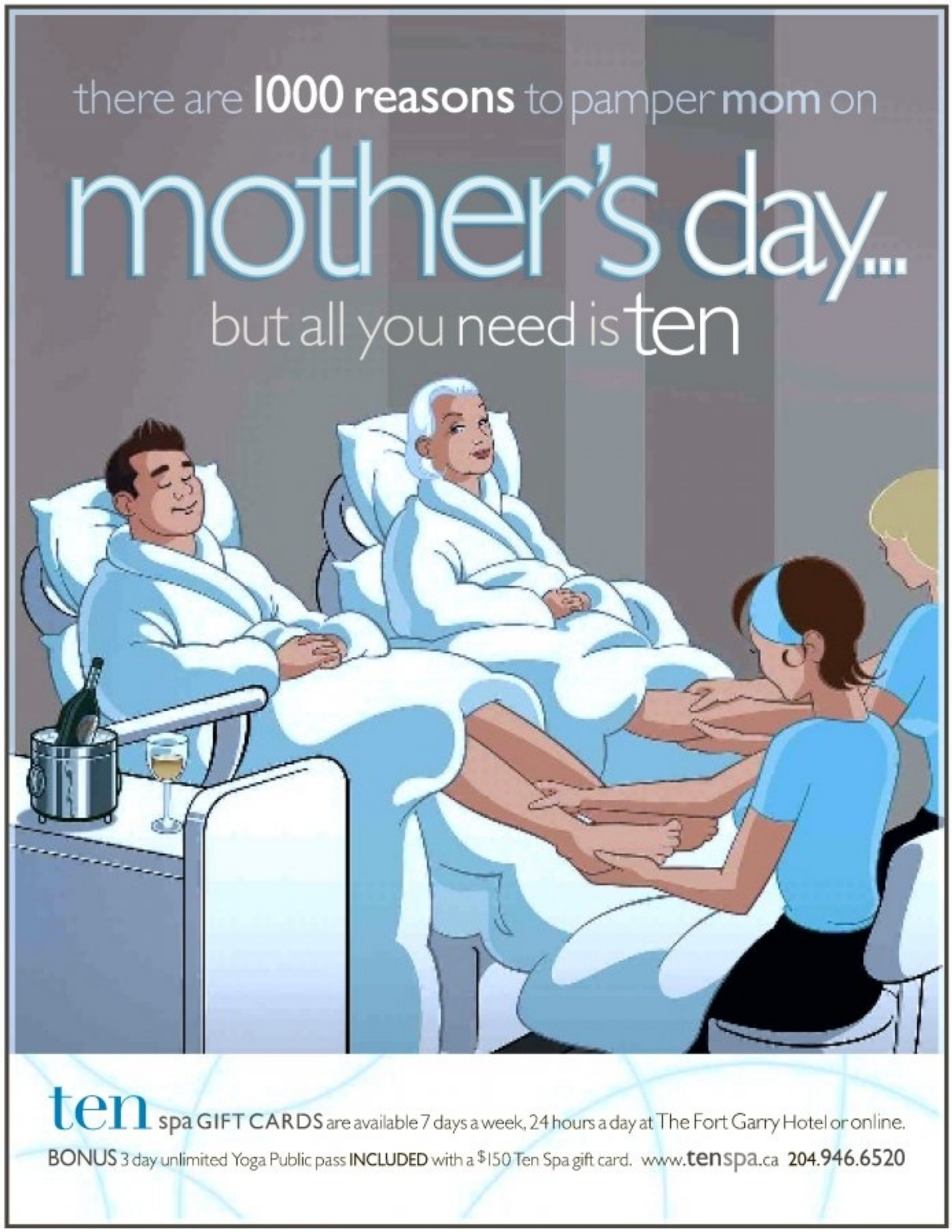
Mom may want a smartwatch, but she doesn't want to sacrifice style for functionality. Engineered by HP, the Isaac Mizrahi Smartwatch ($299.99) is available in two Swarovski Crystal-outlined faces in silver and gold-tone stainless steel, and the leather strap is available in five interchangeable colours. Compatible with both iOS and Android phones, this classic watch may have an classic analog face, but it shows message notifications (calls, texts, emails), real-time calendar alerts, social media updates, pedometer and other fitness info, and much more.

For mom with a green thumb

Newsflash: Bluetooth can help your green thumb. The Parrot Flower Power Wireless Plant Sensor ($59.95) is a smart gardening gadget capable of assessing your plants' needs and sends alerts to your smartphone. Simply insert this doohickey into the soil and let its four sensors do the work.

Then look at the accompanying iOS or Android app for real-time info related to sunlight exposure, soil moisture, temperature, humidity and drainage.

1 Epson Expression ET-2550 EcoTank All-in-One, $399.
2 Isaac Mizrahi Smartwatch, $299.99.
3 Dell Inspiron 11 3000, from $499.99.
4 Nespresso OriginalLine Prodigio, from $269.
5 UA HealthBox, $549.



The off-season is a perfect, and more affordable, time to explore Havana, Cuba. CUBA TOURISM

On Mother's Day, destination spas see a significant number of guests who are mothers and daughters. COURTESY OF ST. ANNES SPA

What mom wants the most: memories

Vawn Himmelsbach

Sure, flowers and chocolates are nice, but what do moms really want this Mother's Day?

A survey by Ebates found that 63 per cent of moms want to spend quality time with their family this Mother's Day, while one-third say they'd like a spa day. And take note: a whopping 94 per cent say they absolutely do not want a gym membership.

Whether a spa day, weekend retreat or last-minute trip, a getaway with mom isn't just about giving her some much-needed time off; it also provides bonding time with family away from the pressures of everyday life.

Judi Oracheski, owner of Gypsy Group Travel Inc. in Halifax, says she's had quite a few moms and daughters (as well as sisters) book getaways to Las Vegas, since it's an ideal destination for shopping and shows, and easily accessible from most of Canada. With a seat sale or hotel promo, a Vegas getaway can also be reasonably priced, she said.

And in May, there are typically last-minute deals to Caribbean isles such as the Dominican Republic and Cuba, as those destinations head into their off-season.

Other getaways can be tailored to mom's interests, such as theatre, arts or music. Oracheski booked a mother and daughter on a Broadway-themed trip to New York City, for example, which included tickets to Wicked and Mamma Mia.

But you don't have to leave the country to get away. "My mom and I did a three-night getaway to Quebec City once," said Oracheski. "We stayed in the Chateau Frontenac and felt like royalty. It was awesome!"

At Ste. Anne's Spa in Grafton, Ont., a significant number of guests are mothers and daughters. "However, we certainly do see an increase in the month of May," said Wanda Hoehn, the spa's director of sales and marketing. She's also seeing more multi-generational visits, with daughter, mother and grandmother.

"At a place like ours, there are really no outside distractions like phones or work and family pressures," said Hoehn. "You have the opportunity for such quality one-on-one time here, all the while enjoying soothing spa treatments, comforting cuisine and beautiful surroundings. When you are in a state of true relaxation, I think the most genuine bonding happens."

For Mother's Day, Hoehn recommends purchasing a gift certificate for two.

"I always think a spa retreat together is the best gift that you can give," said Hoehn, "as not only do you give the gift of relaxation, which all of us need regularly, but you give the gift of time with you — which invariably moms will cherish the most."

I Love You Mom

From April 27 to May 7, shop at Portage Place and enter to win a special prize pack for Mother's Day, including:

$500 Ticketmaster gift card
$100 Moxies gift card
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Present your same-day receipt for $35 or more (before tax) on anything purchased at Portage Place to enter.

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Score brownie points with mom

SAY IT WITH FOOD

Spread the love with easy-to-enjoy meals

Tina Anson Mine

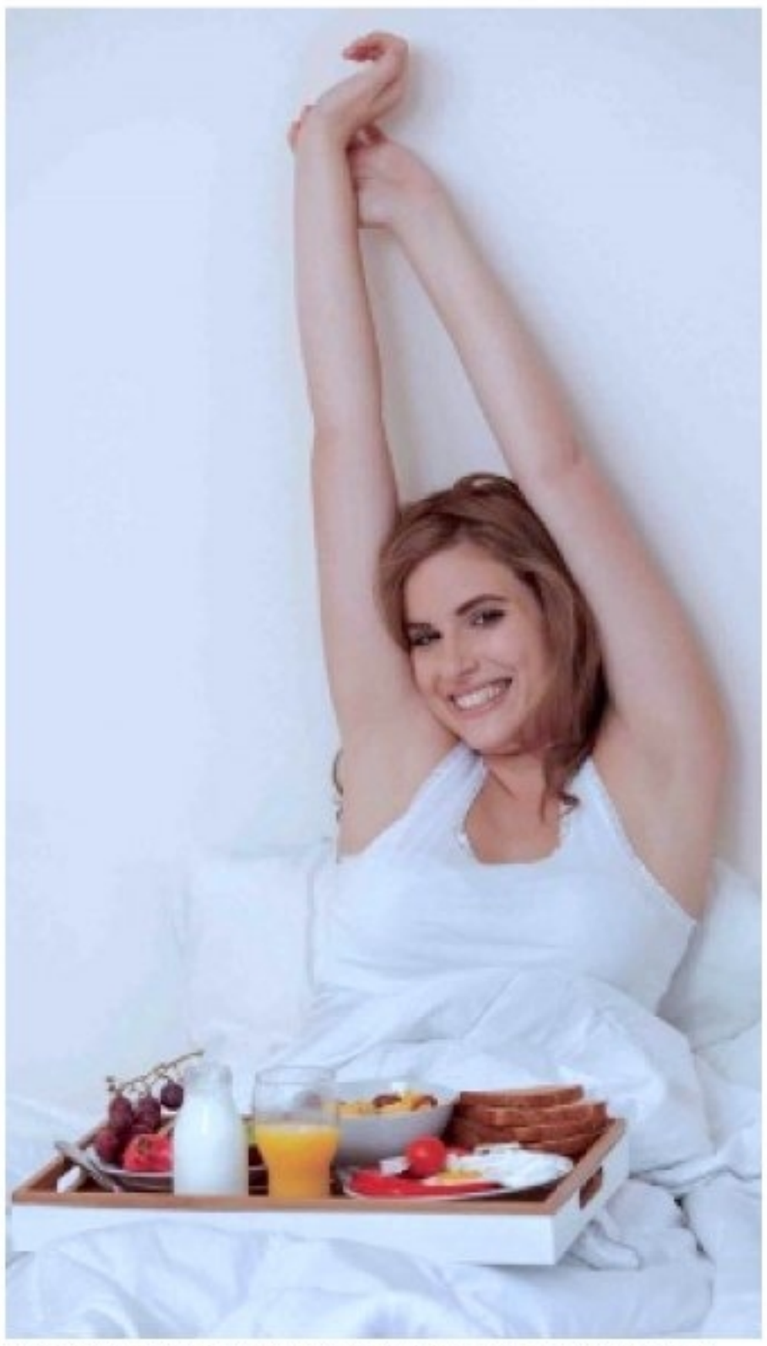
Mother's Day: the holiday when moms are supposed to get a break — but don't.

Often, they're throwing a bash for another mother (their own or their spouse's) or being treated to a mountain of breakfast-in-bed dishes created by well-meaning kids.

This Mother's Day, serve the lady in your life what she really wants: a meal that says "I love you, Mom" with a side of peace. (Hint: please don't ask her to cook it herself.)

• **Breakfast in bed:** Easy cleanup is key here. Nothing spoils the day like maple syrup-sticky sheets or itchy crumbs stuck to the pillows. Serve up easy-to-enjoy finger foods, such as scones or muffins, along with a nice strong cup of coffee or tea. Offer some tasty spreads, jams or a homemade fruit-laced butter to dress up baked goods and make them special. The best part: Most can be made a day ahead, and even beginning bakers (read: the kids) can turn out delicious results.

• **Brunch:** On Mother's Day, brunch is usually a family affair. If you're hosting, choose recipes that get some of the work done ahead of time. Think stratas, quiches and other baked egg dishes, which can often be made and refrigerated the night before, then popped in the oven just before serving time. These give everyone — even the host — plenty of time to relax and chat when guests arrive.



Breakfast in bed is a Mother's Day classic. To make it extra special serve make-ahead finger foods this year. ISTOCK

• **Lunch:** Instead of making a traditional hot main dish and sides, turn lunch into a laid-back DIY affair with a sophisticated edge. Serve a selection of artisanal-style breads, fancy charcuterie, cheeses, pickles and antipasti and let everyone assemble a low-fuss ploughman's lunch. Make a batch of hummus or another savoury spread (or two) to add a homemade accent to easy-to-find store-bought options. This is the perfect time to indulge in frilly napkins and get out the antique family china to make your table setting more meaningful.

• **Dinner:** Sure, Father's Day is all about the grilling, but shouldn't moms get their chance at barbecued goodness? (Best part: no extra pots and pans to scrub for the cook.) Go simple, with gourmet sausages for carnivorous types. Or get adventurous and try a whole roast chicken on the grill; mix butter with your (or, better yet, her) favourite chopped fresh herbs and spread it under the skin to create a golden, crackly finish. Don't forget to toast Mom with a special drink, whether it's her beloved salt-rimmed margarita, the best Scotch in the house or a fruity mocktail.

• **Dessert:** You get cake year-round for birthdays, so this is the holiday to try something different. Creamy pies, like coconut or banana cream, look dressed-up but aren't tough to make, even for novice bakers. Need something even easier? A simple ice cream pie can be a big treat: Bake a ready-made crust from the freezer section, let it cool, and spoon in Mom's favourite ice cream. Freeze until firm and top with a big spoonful of whipped cream. Now that's love.

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Fiberglass igloos being used by Hawaiian church as form of non-profit housing

Bungalow bliss in Amber Trails

ON THE MARKET

CONTRIBUTED

Housing amenities

This 10 year-old bungalow boasts the much-loved open-floor plan with a kitchen, den, formal dining room and great room all beneath nine-foot ceilings. The kitchen ticks all the boxes with maple cabinets, granite countertops, stainless appliances and a walk-in pantry. As a bonus, the lower level includes a large rec room, a second kitchen, two additional bedrooms plus a third bathroom.

In the neighbourhood

Amber Trails offers three lakes and more than 40 acres of green space within the neighbourhood. There are four schools in the area with a new K-8 coming soon. Garden City Shopping Centre is five minutes away and offers all the amenities along with restaurants and services. Seven Oaks General Hospital is adjacent to the neighbourhood with The Wellness Institute next door. The Garden City Community Centre and brand new Seven Oaks Sportsplex offers family recreation year round.

Location and transit

The north Winnipeg neighbourhood of Amber Trails is bordered by Pipeline Road and Leila Avenue, both of which connect to the area's main thoroughfare, McPhillips Street. Transit routes are plentiful along Leila Avenue and McPhillips Street with easy connections to more southern destinations. It's less than a 15-minute drive to the heart of the city. For those looking to get out of town on weekends, wide open spaces are only a few minutes away. SHEL ZOLKEWICH/FOR METRO

NEED TO KNOW

Location: 66 Tessler Bay
Building: Bungalow
Sizes: 1,849 sq. ft.
Bedrooms: Five
Bathrooms: Three
Price: $519,500
Status: For sale
Contact and Phone: Anita Sharma Turner, RE/MAX Associates, (204) 997-5337
Website: anitasharmaturner.remax.ca

Proper soil prep not only helps seeds germinate and plants grow, it also helps keep disease and insect infestations to a minimum so you can later reap a bountiful harvest. MARKCULLEN.COM

How to prepare soil for your garden

GREEN THUMB

A great yard starts with dirt

Mark Cullen
For Torstar News Service

You dream of an amazing garden. Perhaps, in your mind's eye, you can see plants loaded with colour, others hanging with fruit and vegetables. You see birds and butterflies choosing your space as their home this summer.

All gardeners have these dreams. For me, these dreams are mostly reality — though gardening season never unfolds quite like I imagine during the snow-filled days of winter.

The disappointments, though, are always balanced off with good surprises: Mother Nature is like that, never predictable.

One thing I can predict is this: if you prepare well the soil in which you plant, you are far more likely to see your gardening dreams become reality.

First, you should be composting. Why compost? Consider what compost is: decomposed natural material. Your banana peels, egg shells and coffee grounds break down to a higher purpose.

As they rot, they marry up with other organic materials, water and oxygen to become alive with the most precious things in life: microbes, beneficial bacteria, insects (including earthworms) and mycorrhiza, a fungus.

All farmers, but organic farmers in particular, know when they add nutrients to the soil amazing things happen.

Seeds germinate, plants grow and disease and insect infestations are minimized (no, they don't go away). In short, the soil is to plants what the dinner table is to humans. It's where they go to get life.

This is the perfect time to prepare for planting. Here are my soil-enhancement tips:

Spread it deep

Last year's garden used up much of the nutrition in the soil.

Now is the time to replenish it with generous quantities of finished compost. Compost from your composting unit works, but generally there is precious little of it to show for all of your trekking out there with kitchen scraps.

Acquire quality compost by the 20-kilogram bag at your favourite garden retailer and look for composted cattle or sheep manure that is certified by the Compost Quality Alliance.

Bio Max is the trade name and this is the good stuff.

> **You will allow the myriad colonies of earthworms in your yard to do their job.**
> Mark Cullen on composting

Earthworms

Let the earthworms turn your compost under the soil for you.

By merely spreading compost over existing garden beds and relaxing, you will allow the myriad colonies of earthworms in your yard to do their job: they are the foot soldiers of the garden.

Within about six weeks they will have pulled the compost down into the subsoil and converted it into earthworm magic: castings, digested organic matter passed by earthworms.

Add castings

For a long time earthworm castings were considered expensive and were hard to find.

A fishing-worm supplier in Burlington, Ont., has changed that and now you can buy a five-litre bag of earthworm castings for about $8 at the hardware store. I mix one part castings with 10 parts compost.

Prepare the hole

You will be digging holes for larger plants that also require soil preparation.

Dig the hole more wide than deep as most roots spread horizontally.

A hole that is three times as wide as the root mass of the plant and two times as deep is perfect.

Back fill the hole with 2/3 soil and 1/3 compost and a scoop or two of worm castings, or purchase a quality pre-mixed garden soil and add one part worm castings to 10 parts new soil.

Mark Cullen is an expert gardener, author and broadcaster.

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TIPS

Maximize outdoor space with colour, plants and lighting

Shelter magazines this time of year are fond of featuring expansive outdoor spaces with sprawling gardens and entertaining areas.

But for many people, especially city dwellers, the at-home al fresco area is more postage-stamp than palatial.

Not a problem, says Katy Kiick Condon, a senior editor at Better Homes & Gardens magazine. She advises using the same space-saving tricks outdoors that you do indoors.

Think of the terrace as an extension of the kitchen or living room. "Try using the same colour scheme and styles. The continuity will visually combine the spaces, and make your terrace feel larger," Condon says. "Outside, you can punch up the colours, and be a little more playful with art and decor."

New furniture designs for 2016 take into account the challenges of limited space, says Jackie Hirschhaut, executive director of the International Casual Furnishings Association's outdoor division.

"Manufacturers have created compact, functional furnishings that add style and comfort to even the most pint-size patios," she says.

Some manufacturers have started producing "balcony height" chairs and tables for the outdoor market; they're tall enough that you can see over the railing, but not so tall that you could fall over it.

If you're more into lounging than dining outdoors, forgo a table for one or two comfy chaises or chairs. Look for colourful, folding Adirondack chairs made of recycled, durable synthetic wood.

To add some interesting light sources, hang a pendant over a table or change existing sconces, advises Condon.

"With the improvements in solar- and battery-powered lights, there are tons of options that don't require hard-wiring," she says.

You can take more risks with brighter hues outdoors. GLOSTER

Add some art to your "indoor-outdoor room": look for maps, photos or vintage ads that reference your home's location.

As for window treatments for terrace doors; outdoor fabrics have improved, feeling and looking more like interior textiles.

"Build up, not out," Condon says. Use vertical space by bringing in tall potted plants, hanging planters from the ceiling or creating a screen of planters. Look for colourful, pattern-rich umbrellas that tilt and shift.

But what if you've really got no room for any furnishings, and no view either?

"If the best part is just 10 square feet of fresh air, add a gorgeous runner and find some plants to breathe it in with you," Condon advises. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The best of the 'starchitects'

Two chairs by Spanish designer Patricia Urquiola for Cassina. LUCA BRUNO/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

TRENDS

Eastern, feminine inspiration at play

Big Italian furniture brands turned out collections at the 55th Milan Furniture Fair that included forgotten or neglected treasures from their archives, along with fresh innovations by the "starchitects" who have infused design with glamour.

A record 372,000 people attended the premier event for Italian design and furnishings this April. It featured more than 2,400 exhibitors at the Rho fairgrounds and spilled out into eight design districts in Milan's city centre. The annual gathering highlights the prowess of Italy's furniture manufacturing sector, which last year reported a 3 per cent increase of revenues to nearly 25 billion euros ($28 billion U.S.).

Some highlights:

Gender bending

Patricia Urquiola, who was named Cassina's new art director in September, is doing it all: launching her own designs while curating new works from colleagues, and updating the Italian brand's iconic pieces ahead of its 90th anniversary next year.

Urquiola said she has brought a more feminine influence to the Cassina DNA, which "has always been very masculine, very architectural."

She started with a new armchair called Gender, which she described as her "manifesto piece." It combines two elements: a ridged, high-back form that embraces the occupant with a more cartilaginous, adjustable headrest and a fitted cushioned "dress." The chair can be paired with an inverted U-shaped ottoman.

"I think it is time to stop the argument of gender. We need more blended gender," she said.

For her debut collection, Urquiola also revisited a steel-supported table designed by Carlo Scarpa in 1968, making it from anodized aluminum in strong shades including copper and matte red to lighten the impact. The table in the central Milan showroom featured a clear glass top, but it's also available in white or black marble.

"Now the table is much lighter," she said. "Evolution means to take care of things and make them new."

East meets west

Taiwan-based architect Shi-Chieh Lu adapted the traditional yoke-back Ming chair popular in China for Poltrona Frau, as the Italian brand infuses its collection.

While the Ming chair has traditionally been crafted from wood, the Ming's Heart design for Poltrona Frau takes its European cues from the leather styling. The distinctive geometric back and seat are suspended from the tubular frame, creating the sensation of a swing.

"It gives the idea of floating in the air," Shi-Chieh said.

The Ming chair is among a series of pieces commissioned by Asian designers this year that merge with Poltrona Frau's iconic pieces and contemporary design.

"I think that Frau is recognizable beyond the fact of whether a designer is from Taiwan or from Milan, because identity is something you create through the construction, the way of working the leather, and the stitching," said Marco Romanelli, who is in charge of reviving the brand's icons.

The essenital chair

Leave it to Knoll to provide the essential chair update.

The U.S. brand has made some of the world's most distinctive, enduring chair designs, including Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's Barcelona chair. "The chair is an intricate question," allowed Benjamin Pardo, Knoll's design director, recalling the 70 series executive seating collection that marked the brand's entry into the European market in the mid-20th century.

Knoll's latest entry to the world of side dining seating, designed by Marc Krusin, arches comfortably around the occupant and features a functional horizontal aperture between the seat and the back that is both appealing to the eye and allows for easing lifting. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

First-time homebuyers tips

Plan ahead, expect the unexpected, says real-estate expert

Plan ahead when looking to buy a home by setting a budget to account for emergencies and little extras. ISTOCK

Buying your first home is an emotional time. The entire process of viewings, making offers and finally getting the keys is full of excitement, fear and anticipation. First-time homebuyers — or "property virgins," as they were called on the hit HGTV show — have a lot to learn as they navigate the real-estate waters for the first time. Erica Nielsen, VP of Home Equity Financing at RBC, offers five pieces of wisdom to help buy with confidence:

1. Know what you can afford
Many first-time buyers start their home search by asking what neighbourhood they want to live in. "This can lead to disappointment," says Nielsen. "They get their heart set on a certain neighbourhood and then find out they cannot afford it." Be realistic about what you can afford and look for homes within that price range.

2. Consider the hidden costs
There's more to the cost of owning a home than just your mortgage and utilities. "There's the first time you go to shovel your walk and realize you don't have a snow shovel," says Nielsen. While a shovel is a small expense, add to that a lawn mower to cut your grass, painting supplies, and all the miscellaneous items that come with owning a home — not to mention maintenance costs — and you could end up spending a couple of thousand dollars a year that you hadn't anticipated.

3. Seek advice from various people
Buying your first home can be a daunting experience. Surround yourself with people who can provide you with advice on everything from how to purchase your home to how to secure financing and ultimately how to maintain your property. "It's the single biggest expense you're ever going to have in your life," says Nielsen. "You need all these kinds of specialists in your community to provide you with the competence for that purchase."

4. Keep your lifestyle in mind
Mortgage payments, property taxes, insurance, utilities ... all these bills and more can seriously change the lifestyle you've grown accustomed to. Consider how much you spend on entertainment, education and vacations and ask yourself what you're willing to give up to own your own home. "Sometimes that means waiting longer, saving more before you get into the market," says Nielsen, who advises first-time buyers to consider all the components that make for a satisfying life and weigh these against home ownership.

5. Look ahead
When Nielsen and her husband purchased their first home, their financial adviser asked her to consider what her life would look like several years down the road and to purchase the biggest house she could afford rather than settling for a "starter home." Nielsen sat on the sidelines for a while until she was able to save enough money to buy a family home with an extra bedroom. "That allowed us to have two children and not have to move," she says.

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metro SPORTS

"I've always wanted to go against Wade in a playoff series": LeBron James eyes a possible Eastern Conference final vs. his former team

Hockey gods boost Jets' potential with No. 2 pick

VIEW FROM THE 300S
Andrew 'Hustler' Paterson

The Jets could use the No. 2 overall pick on either Jesse Puljujarvi, left, or Patrik Laine.
LEFT: DARREN CALABRESE/THE CANADIAN PRESS; RIGHT: RONI REKOMAA/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

On Saturday, April 30 in Toronto, Lady Luck smiled on the Winnipeg Jets at the NHL Draft Lottery.

With a kiss of good fortune, the Jets organization and its loyal fanbase received arguably the biggest jolt of hope and excitement since the NHL returned to Winnipeg in 2011.

Anxious fans gathered around TV sets and radios hoping the Jets could jump into the top three and earn the chance to grab one of the three prospects that have separated themselves from the rest of the pack. When Bill Daly turned over the card of the sixth pick in the lottery draft and showed the logo of the Calgary Flames there was immediate elation — the Jets would be picking in the top three.

When the dust settled, the Columbus Blue Jackets were revealed as the third pick leaving Winnipeg and the Toronto Maple Leafs for the top two spots. Daly announced the Leafs would be picking No. 1 and the Jets at two, but both were huge winners.

In receiving the second pick for the NHL draft in June, the Jets find themselves in a position to select a potential franchise-changing player.

Since 2011 the Jets have never picked higher than seventh in the draft and have had considerable success with those early picks. But the No. 2 pick in the 2016 draft is a prize of a much greater scale.

Auston Matthews will likely be selected first by Toronto. The talented centre is tops on most draft boards, but not all. Finnish winger Patrik Laine has jumped Matthews on some scouts' rankings after an incredible year, but he is not the automatic choice at two.

Another Finn, Jesse Puljujarvi, is right in the mix after being voted MVP at the world juniors. Both Finns are big and talented. Who should be picked first depends on who you talk to.

With the Jets set to select one of these players next month, expectations going into camp will be much different. Already having signed NCAA scoring champ Kyle Connor, and having many prospects get a taste of the NHL last season, the battle for NHL jobs will be much more interesting and competitive than we have seen before.

The Jets' good fortune of winning the No. 2 pick in the draft has the fanbase justifiably fired up for the draft and next season. The team, only one year removed from a 99-point playoff season, now has a much better chance of not only returning to the postseason sooner but a much more realistic chance of being a legitimate Cup contender down the road.

A certain section of our population celebrates 4/20 annually with much fanfare. If the player the Jets select at No. 2 next month becomes an NHL star, Winnipeg fans may just celebrate 4/30 every year, thanking the hockey gods for the gift the team received Saturday night.

IN BRIEF

Coyotes to promote 26-year-old to GM: Source

A person familiar with the situation has told The Associated Press that the Arizona Coyotes will promote 26-year-old John Chayka to general manager, making him the youngest GM in NHL history.

Chayka, a native of Jordan Station, Ont., will replace Don Maloney, who was fired on April 11 after nine seasons as GM.
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Hartley miffed over philosophical differences

Bob Hartley says he was surprised to hear that there were differences in philosophy within the Calgary Flames.

A day after being fired as head coach, Hartley said on a conference call that he thought he and Flames general manager Brad Treliving were on the same page. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Cubs sweep rival Pirates

Ben Zobrist hit a three-run home run, Anthony Rizzo also connected and Jon Lester worked out of a pair of jams to carry the NL Central-leading Chicago Cubs over the second-place Pittsburgh Pirates 6-2 Wednesday for a three-game sweep.

With its seventh win in eight games, Chicago improved to a major league-best 20-6. The Cubs also won their seventh straight road game. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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RECIPE Lemon Thyme Chicken Burger

PHOTO: MAYA VISNYEI

Ceri Marsh & Laura Keogh
For Metro Canada

Lemon and thyme are such an appealing spring flavour combo that we come back to it over and over. It's an unexpected addition to a burger and don't skip the goat cheese which takes it over the top.

Ready in
Prep time: 10 minutes
Cook time: 10 minutes

Ingredients
- 1 lb ground chicken
- 2 Tbsp fresh thyme
- 1 Tbsp lemon zest
- 1 egg, whisked
- 1 Tbsp lemon juice
- 1/2 onion, finely minced
- 1/4 cup breadcrumbs
- 2 tsp dijon mustard
- salt and pepper
- 1 Tbsp vegetable oil
- 4 wholewheat rolls
- toppings like lettuce, tomatoes, goat cheese

Directions

1. In a large bowl, mix together the meat, thyme, zest, juice, egg, breadcrumbs, onions mustard and salt and pepper. Using your hands, form the mixture into 4 x ¾ inch-thick patties.

2. Heat up your pan or barbecue. Add a drop of vegetable oil to the pan if you're cooking them on the stove. Cook the patties over medium/high heat for about 5 minutes on each side. You want the internal temperature to be between 165 and 170.

3. Top your buns with whatever your family likes but we highly recommend goat cheese.

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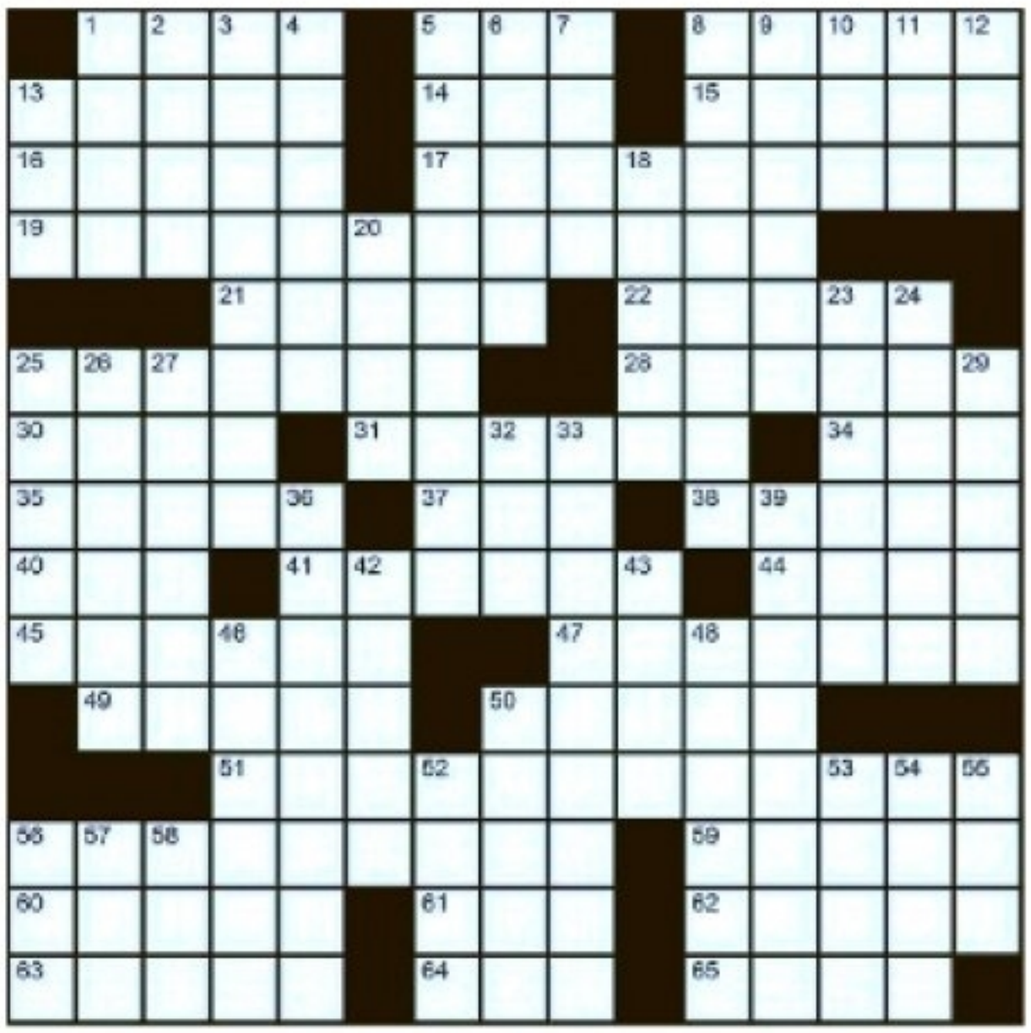
CROSSWORD Canada Across and Down

BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



ACROSS
1. Cutting comment
5. "Roxanne" (1987) star ...his initials-sharers
8. Relating to Atomic Number 76
13. Jazz/funk saxophonist Mr. Parker
14. Head-to-_
15. "Wheel of Fortune" letters turner
16. Drinking prop
17. Montreal borough
19. Hit movie of 1984 directed by Canadian director Ivan Reitman
21. Prison takeover, for example
22. Sun-dried brick
25. Newfoundland rum
28. Host/comedian Mr. O'Brien's
30. Murmurs
31. Fort _. _ (Northeastern BC city)
34. Dangerous fly, when doubled
35. Put down
37. "Wowy!"
38. Cyber correspondence
40. Broadcaster Mr. King, for short
41. Make a new home, as a bird
44. Gymnast Ms. Korbut
45. Very small antelope which makes a distinct sound when alarmed
47. Cone-shaped Medieval headdresses
49. "_ _ say more?"
50. Prefix to 'comedy' (Comedic drama)
51. Cheater's problem: 2 wds.
56. Oval track vehicle: 2 wds.
59. Sample that sample: 2 wds.
60. Jean _ (Quebec pharmacy chain)
61. _ de coeur (Heartfelt protest)
62. Some seals
63. Short acting performances
64. Suffix with 'Expert'
65. Peter Pan character

DOWN
1. Aptly-named hot springs town in England
2. Prefix to 'bat' (Circus performer)
3. Appraise anew
4. Tuxedo-wearer's accessory
5. 'Crossroads of Friendship' town in southern Saskatchewan
6. Computer's pointer/clicker
7. Cobblestone
8. Cooked too much
9. _ and Delilah
10. Alphabetic trio
11. Lodging for road trippers
12. Feline
13. Food additive, commonly
18. Stretch to grasp
20. Bird 'bills' in Boucherville
23. Celebrity chef Mario of ABC's "The Chew"
24. Navy rank
25. Steamily sting
26. Nirvana rocker Kurt
27. Mr. _ ("Fantasy Island" character)
29. Actress Ms. Ward's
32. Morning beverage, informally
33. 1984 Steve Perry song that goes "You should've been gone / Knowing how I made you feel.": 2 wds.
36. Southern hemisphere constellation
39. Personalized embroidery, as on a bathrobe
42. "Stand By Me" by Ben _. _
43. Ms. Hatcher
46. Joyce of "Three's Company"
48. Last regular play baseball innings
50. Department store chain
52. Nero's 701
53. Literature governess Jane
54. "Egad!"
55. Ands: French
56. Lettered colas
57. Hunky-dory
58. _ bono? = For whose benefit? ...in Latin

IT'S ALL IN THE STARS Your daily horoscope by Francis Drake

Aries March 21 - April 20
Business, commerce and all financial dealings are blessed today — no question. Do the deal. In addition, purchases of beautiful things for yourself and loved ones will please you. Ka-ching!

Taurus April 21 - May 21
You love beautiful things, good food and the outdoors, especially lovely gardens. Today is the perfect day to enjoy these things. It's also a lovely day for romance.

Gemini May 22 - June 21
Solitude in beautiful surroundings will delight you today. Pamper yourself in any way that you can.

Cancer June 22 - July 23
You will enjoy hanging out with creative, charming people today. You feel social and warmhearted toward others.

Leo July 24 - Aug. 23
You will make a great impression on bosses, parents, teachers and VIPs today. In fact, a flirtation or romance with your boss or someone in a position of authority might blossom.

Virgo Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
Give yourself a chance to see beautiful places today. Travel for pleasure will be a treat, because you will truly appreciate the artistic creations of others.

Libra Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
Because you can benefit from the wealth and resources of others today, this is a good time to ask for a loan or a mortgage. In all your dealings with others, people will be generous to you.

Scorpio Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
Relations with partners and close friends are warm and friendly today. This is a great day for a date or schmoozing with the general public.

Sagittarius Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
Co-workers are supportive today. You might get a raise or praise! You will enjoy making your workplace more attractive in some way. (Let others help you if they offer.)

Capricorn Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
Love at first sight is encouraged by the stars today. Whatever you do will be pleasant, fun-loving and enjoyable, because this is a lighthearted, pleasant day.

Aquarius Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
This is a good day to check out real estate deals or to buy something beautiful for your home. Invite the gang over for good food and drink, because today also favors family get-togethers.

Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
You can make money with your words today, which is good news for writers, actors, teachers and people in sales.

CONCEPTIS SUDOKU by Dave Green

Every row, column and box contains 1-9

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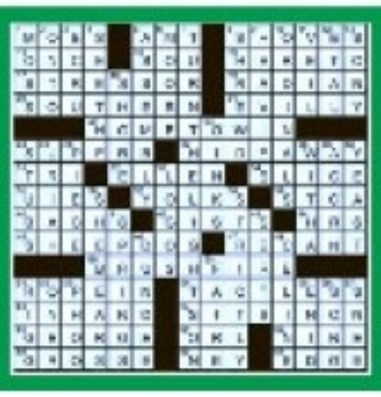
Your daily crossword and Sudoku answers from the play page.

for more fun and games go to metronews.ca/games



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